

# THE INDEPENDENT

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## Nigerian crime poses serious threat in Britain

The intelligence agencies MI6 and MI5 are being used to clamp down on fraud and drug-dealing by West African gangs. Jason Bennetto, Crime Correspondent, investigates a trend costing Britain billions of pounds a year.

The criminals, mainly Nigerians, have been discovered working inside government departments, the police and tax offices. The level of crime is so serious that the National Criminal Intelligence Service will tomorrow announce an expansion of its work against the gangs.

Agents and eavesdropping equipment from MI5, MI6 and the listening base at the Government Communications Headquarters (GCHQ) in Cheltenham are being used to investigate Nigerian crime. The cost of the fraud alone is £3.5bn a year, says the NCIS.

The fraudsters concentrate on con-tricks and benefit fraud, drug-trafficking, mainly cocaine, and illegal immigration. The intelligence agencies are assisting NCIS and British forces in some of the most serious cases. The secret services can provide expertise in infiltrating the gangs, bugging, covert surveillance and identifying targets.

The gangs, which have strongholds in the US and most European countries, form networks to siphon money and have proved difficult to break into. Activities by West African criminals that have been detected include:

- At the Treasury Solicitor's office, the Government's

lawyers, a worker was using the fax to work a scam involving advance fees. She was admonished and sacked.

- An employee at the Department of Social Security was creating false National Insurance numbers and identifications which were being used to claim benefits such as education grants and child allowance. One individual was found with 100 separate identities.

- A worker at one of the Inland Revenue's accounts offices was caught photocopying incoming company tax returns, cheques, and headed notepaper. These were sold to a contact who wrote to the banks and set up standing orders for small amounts to be paid into their accounts every month.

- The Metropolitan Police had a problem with cleaners found looking for data and addresses in a West End police station.

An estimated 500,000 "advance-fee fraud" or "419" letters attempting to con people by promising risk-free cash are sent by West Africans, mainly from Lagos, around the world every year. The "419" scam is named after the section of the Nigerian penal code dealing with fraud. Thousands of individuals and companies in Britain are randomly written to and asked if they will help transfer millions of pounds of government money out of Nigeria in return for a cut of the cash.

All they supposedly have to do is provide bank details. But once hooked they are asked for an "advance" or have money removed from their accounts. Millions are stolen this way every year. Needless to say, the government money never existed.

Law enforcers have found it particularly difficult to crack Nigerian crime rings because they have a complicated language which hard to translate and infiltrate. The Nigerian criminals are good networkers and operate in loose-knit organisations. There are big Nigerian crime rings in Poland, Russia and Bangkok.

An NCIS spokesman confirmed that Nigerian fraudsters had been found working "from the Government to the private sector. They are not just trying to get money, they also want letterheads which can be used for further frauds."

A police source said that you can always tell if a law enforcer is dealing with organised Nigerian crime because "they have a broken marriage, a drink problem, and the largest card index in the office." A small number of the criminals also come from Ghana.

The NCIS, backed by law enforcers from the G8 group of countries, are to launch new anti-crime initiatives aimed at organised West African offenders. Detective Superintendent Bryan Drew, head of the NCIS's Strategic and Specialist Intelligence Branch, said: "West African organised crime is now in the big league - we recognise they now pose a significant threat." Commenting on contributions by the secret services, he said: "The UK intelligence agencies provide support and information that we could not get from anywhere else. They each have specialist skills which can be extremely useful in our investigations."

Another intelligence officer said: "It's by far the most insidious crime problem the UK has got."



Karla Faye Tucker is scheduled for death by lethal injection in Texas tomorrow. Photograph: Ron Kuntz/Sygma

## America divided by woman on Death Row

In a case that is dividing America, a woman is due to be executed tomorrow for a murder she committed almost 15 years ago. The campaign for a reprieve has brought together feminists, liberals and the Christian right. And the final decision on her fate may rest with George Bush, governor of Texas and son of the former president.

There is little to say about the crime itself. In June 1983, Karla Faye Tucker and her boyfriend broke into a Houston home and slaughtered the two people inside. They did it with a pick-axe. Ms Tucker, then 23, declared that with each swing of the blade she experienced a surge of sexual pleasure.

Tomorrow, she is scheduled to be transported to Huntsville prison near Houston, where at 6pm she will be connected to the IV drip that will feed into her veins the poisons that will dispatch her from this life.

Tucker, 38, has never denied her guilt. (Her boyfriend died from natural causes on death row). But few cases created as much national controversy. Even in Texas, which outstrips other states in its dedication to capital punishment, opinion is convulsed.

Those campaigning for Ms Tucker to be spared include not only human rights activists like Bianca Jagger, but also Pat Robertson, the right-wing evangelist.

Barring last-minute intervention by the Supreme Court itself in Washington, the only hope for Tucker rests in Austin, the Texas state capital. The State Board of Pardons and Paroles will decide today whether to recommend commutation of her sentence from death to life imprisonment. Thereafter the Governor Bush will have to decide.

Mr Bush will have to consider the factors that seem to have combined in her favour - namely that she is female, attractive, telegenic and a friend of Christ.

Tucker herself has asked that her gender not be taken into account. Even so, it seems America and Texas especially is simply squeamish about executing a woman.

Then there is her alleged born-again embrace of Christianity. In prison, Tucker has become a counsellor to other inmates on Christian belief and redemption. And in a television interview to be broadcast tomorrow, Ms Tucker asks her supporters only one thing. Not to question God, if indeed she is sent to die.

— David Osborne, New York

Leading article, page 14

### INSIDE TODAY



**Deborah Ross meets Ian Craft**  
INTERVIEW/13

**Football violence clampdown**  
SPORT/2

### TODAY'S NEWS

#### Stiffer drink-drive fines

Persistent drink-drivers could face heavier fines and longer prison sentences under proposals, designed to reduce the number of road deaths, which are due to be published by the Government today. Page 5

TELEVISION: The Eye, page 11, 12  
RADIO: The Eye, page 20  
The Eye, page 9  
NEW: The Eye, page 10

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## Population explosion forces contraception on Gibraltar's rock apes

The famous Rock apes of Gibraltar are to be given contraception, because while the population of Barbary macaques is growing out of control, local people will not countenance a cull of one of their great tourist attractions.

Contraceptives will be hidden in the monkeys' food or some of the females will be given implants to prevent pregnancy. Their population has grown four-fold to 250 in the past five years, since a law was passed making it an offence to kill them. Thirty monkeys are born each mating season.

For the British forces on the rock, renegade packs of the apes already represent one of the biggest threats to their positions since Gibraltar was handed over by the Spanish in 1704.

The marauding tailless monkeys have moved onto Ministry of Defence property near the top of the rock and have begun ripping sensitive and expensive equipment from mountings

and chewing up cables. They have also been known to lob stones at passers-by.

Tony Carter, manager of the military estates on the rock, said: "We have had people out from Zurich University looking at ways that we can control them, either by contraception, which the Gibraltar government is looking at, or shipping some of them out to America, where they have not got any Barbary macaques. Culling seems to be a dirty word among Gibraltarians."

Paul Montegriffo, director of Sights Management, which has looked after the apes for the Gibraltar government since 1992, agreed. "Culling is not an option which goes down well locally as we have a particular affection for the monkeys. The main option is contraception of some sort, whether it be administered orally in their food or a series of implants is placed in several females to control the population."



Too much monkey business

The natural habitat for the macaque is in the Atlas mountains and pine forests of North Africa and it is believed that they were brought to Gibraltar during the Moorish occupation (700-1500AD). The British are recorded as bringing more macaques from Morocco as pets in 1749.

For many years the monkeys were forced to fight for their survival against eagles which carried away their young. In turn, the apes raided the eagles' nests for eggs.

The eagles were finally driven from the rock by the hordes of herring gulls, leaving the apes without a natural enemy and allowing their population to explode.

## Diplomatic options running out for Iraq

The US warned yesterday that the time for diplomacy was running out and it is prepared to use "substantial" force against Iraq. Madeleine Albright, the US Secretary of State, said on a visit to Jerusalem, that the aim of military action is to prevent Iraq acquiring and developing weapons of mass destruction and threatening its neighbours.

At the beginning of her tour of the Middle East to rally support against the Iraqi leader Saddam Hussein, Mrs Albright said: "We all prefer a diplomatic solution... seems to be narrowing." Questioned about the time-scale for military action, she replied: "The string is running out. The time on it is shorter and shorter... it is not days and not months - that means weeks."

The US is trying to force Iraq to allow UN weapons inspectors access to all sites by escalating verbal and military threats.

Three US aircraft carriers and one British carrier are already in the Gulf with over 300 aircraft. Mrs Albright told Yasser Arafat, the Palestinian leader, yesterday that any military strike against Iraq would be "comprehensive, swift and aimed at specific targets".

Meanwhile Viktor Posuvalyuk, the Russian deputy foreign minister, returned to Baghdad last night for the second time in a week to try to forge a diplomatic compromise. "They [the Iraqis] have made certain proposals," he told Russian television. "We have to try to get more concessions from them so we can make a package of proposals, which would help solve the problem." Last November, Russia defused an earlier confrontation between the US and Iraq over weapons inspections.

As the US and Britain keep up the diplomatic pressure on Baghdad there are signs of nervousness in Washington about the effectiveness of prolonged air strikes in forcing the Iraqi

leader to comply with UN resolutions. William Cohen, the Defense Secretary, warned against "unreasonable expectations" from US air strikes. He said: "We do not have as a goal the toppling of Saddam Hussein."

George Robertson, Britain's Secretary of State for Defence, also said: "We're not in the business of overthrowing Saddam Hussein - that will be the job for his people." Air attacks, if they come, will concentrate on sites such as presidential palaces which UN inspectors have not been allowed to enter, as well as sites used by the Iraqi military and security forces.

Mr Cohen appeared to indicate that the air strikes would not try to destroy the civilian infrastructure of Iraq, such as power stations, oil refineries and bridges, which was one of the most successful strategies of the air campaign in the Gulf war.

— Patrick Cockburn

Jerusalem  
Robert Fisk, page 9  
Bombing limits, page 15

**"Policeman caught speeding at Express Till"**

To ease congestion, Abbey National now open Express Tills, for cash and cheque transactions, at the busiest times of day. A little good news for the front page.

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## COLUMN ONE

### Church under fire for leaving clergy in lurch

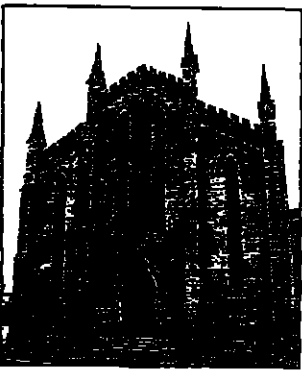
The Church in Wales has been criticised by its vicars for not giving enough help to clergy who have affairs with parishioners.

Nearly one in five vicars canvassed in new research bemoan the lack of support for men of the cloth who are unable to resist the sinful lusts of the flesh. And more of the Welsh clergy have also complained about the lack of church care for those in the ministry who succumb to the temptation of alcohol, have marriage problems, suffer from stress, or simply stop believing.

New research giving a unique glimpse of the innermost thoughts of male clergy in Wales, reveals a congregation of vicars worried about lack of care, who suffer overwork, burn-out and stress and who, on a less spiritual level, lament the better wages, houses and career prospects of clerics across the border in England.

The research comes in the wake of concern about the high number of ordained clergy who have been leaving the church. A quarter of vicars ordained since 1971 have left the Church in Wales, according to the report in Contemporary Wales, shortly to be published by the University of Wales Press.

The researchers sent questionnaires to 672 vicars, many of whom had left, including a few found serving time in prison, but based their research on the 307 still working full time for the CWT.



The report's authors, Professor Leslie Francis and Susan Jones, say there are clear warning signs in the research for the church: "It needs to be recalled that as many as one in four of the clergy ordained between 1971 and 1992 have ceased to minister within the CWT. Many of those clergy who remain in active ministry show significant signs of dissatisfaction. Many are feeling stressed and burnt out. Many feel unsupported by the church they serve. Many lack confidence in the bishops ... The warning signs are there and it would clearly be irresponsible for the Church in Wales to ignore them." It adds: "A crucial question to be faced by the churches is that of who cares for the carers. A major finding from this survey concerns the extent to which clergy feel unsupported by the church they serve."

The research shows that one in six vicars complain that the church does not show enough care for clergy who have affairs with parishioners. Around 40 per cent were also unhappy about the lack of help for those in the ministry with sexual problems. Around half bemoan the absence of sympathy for vicars suffering marriage breakdowns, and 27 per cent criticise the lack of care for clergy with homosexual relationships.

Six out of 10 of the clergy complain the church doesn't show enough support for clergy who suffer work-related stress, while a quarter reckon that working with people all day is a strain. "A fifth say they feel emotionally drained from their parish ministry and 18 per cent say they feel fatigued when they get up in the morning and have to face another day in the parish," says the report. Nearly four out of 10 the clergy say the church is not sufficiently supportive of those who have crises of faith, and a similar proportion criticise the lack of care for those with alcohol problems.

The bishops in the church get a rough time from the vicars too. Only 30 per cent thought they produced good leadership to society, and only 22 per cent of clergy believed the bishops were good theologians.

The research also reveals a group of vicars who believe the church is too lenient with those who fall victim to temptations of one kind or another. Seven per cent thought the church too soft on vicars with marital and alcohol problems, and 15 per cent reckon that colleagues who had affairs with members of their flock were getting away too lightly.

— Roger Dobson

#### CONTENTS

Home news	2-8	Obituaries	16
Foreign news	9-11	Business	17-19
Science	12	Back page	20
Deborah Ross interview	13	Crosswords	The Eye 9
Leader, letters	14	Weather	The Eye 10
Comment	15	TV & radio	The Eye 11, 12

## PEOPLE



Julian Lloyd Webber: 'Tonality and harmony have become dirty words'

### Lloyd Webber attacks 'new führers' of music

Cellist Julian Lloyd Webber has attacked "40 years of madness" in which the Western music hierarchy created a "pernicious politburo" which all but destroyed classical music.

His attack on avant garde, atonal music characterised by the work of composers such as Sir Harrison Birtwistle, will be delivered in a speech at the World Economic Forum in Davos, Switzerland today. In an interview with *The Independent*, in advance of the speech, he attacked "clashing lawnmower" music. "Composers who pursued a logical development of the music of the great masters were increasingly disparaged and derided by the new führers of the classical music establishment, for whom tonality and harmony had become dirty words," he said.

"I'm sure there are people who like that kind of music. What I object to is the unspoken dicta-

torship that permitted only one style of music."

He issued a challenge to British breakfast television companies to put young musicians on air. "The truth is that the vast majority of young people in the West have no interest in classical music whatsoever," he said. Audiences and CD sales were declining, fewer children learnt instruments, and the general media were uninterested. "Give me four weeks of daily three-minute slots and I will deliver you 20 young musicians who will captivate your viewers."

• Andrew Lloyd Webber has sold his London home. Czech businessman Viktor Kozeny, who famously paid £13,000 for dinner-for-three at Le Gavroche is understood to have paid £15m for the six-storey Belgrave house.

— Richard Holford

Lloyd Webber interview: *The Eye*

### 'Full Monty' wins again

*The Full Monty* last night added to a triumphant year when it was named best film at the *Evening Standard* Film Awards. Its star Robert Carlyle (pictured) also won the best actor award.

The double plaudit comes on top of the news a few days ago that the film is Britain's biggest grossing picture yet at the British box office, taking £47.8m and beating *Jurassic Park* at £47.7m.

Last night's award ceremony at the Savoy Hotel in London was attended by stars including Kate Winslet, Jeremy Irons, Sir John Mills, Tim Roth and director Alan Parker. They also witnessed the rare sight at a British Awards ceremony of a prize going to a Mike Leigh film, as Karin Cartledge won the best actress award for her part in *Career Girls*. Leigh's comic study of two female students meeting up some years after they graduated.



Mrs Brown, the portrait of the relationship between Queen Victoria and her ghillie, John Brown, starring Dame Judi Dench and Billy Connolly, won best screenplay. The jury gave a special award to actor and director Kenneth Branagh in recognition of his four hour *Hank*, the best newcomer award went to Jude Law for *Wild*, and a lifetime contribution award went to Roy Boulton, one half of the Boulton brothers, responsible for such vintage British comedies as *Lucky Jim*, *I'm All Right Jack* and *The Family Way*.

— David Lister, Arts News Editor

### Clarke denies sex allegations

Arthur C Clarke, author of *2001: A Space Odyssey*, will be knighted by the Prince of Wales in Sri Lanka on Wednesday despite claims yesterday that he had paid for sex with young boys.

Clarke hit back at the allegations last night while Buckingham Palace and 10 Downing Street said there were no plans to halt the ceremony.

In an article in the *Sunday Mirror*, Clarke, 80, appeared to admit having paid boys for sex. However, speaking from his home in Colombo yesterday, he denied the allegations, saying he had been tricked by the "republican lobby" in the British press. "This was a political hatchet job - not aimed specifically at me, but designed to embarrass Prince Charles. I have not been sexually active for more than 20 years."

Royal visit, page 10

## UPDATE

### SOCIETY

#### Age bias 'a national shame'

More than 18 million British adults have experienced age discrimination in employment, health or welfare, according to a new survey released today.

The Gallup poll found that 70 per cent of the population believe age discrimination exists, while 18.5 million Britons have personal experience of it in one or more aspect of their life. Only half of them were over 45 - showing that it is a problem which affects most ages.

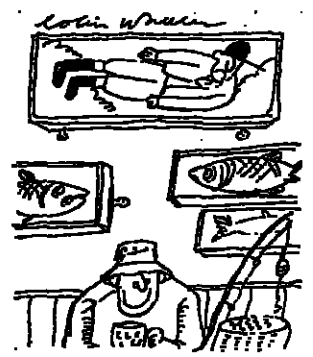
The survey was carried out for Age Concern to mark the beginning of the UK's first age discrimination week, when the charity will press the Government to introduce new legislation to outlaw the practice. It found that: 8 million people have experienced age discrimination in employment - 35 per cent were between 45-64, while 27 per cent were 16-24; almost 3 million people say they have been denied health care because of their age, while 6 million say they have experienced discrimination in insurance services; and 3.6 million feel they have suffered discrimination in financial services. Sally Greengross, director general of Age Concern, said: "Age discrimination is a national shame and should be outlawed. Our survey proves that action to eliminate it is essential."

### COUNTRY LIFE

#### Anglers back fox-hunting ban

Anti-hunt campaigners were today given a boost by a MORI poll showing 73 per cent of anglers and 68 per cent of riders back a Labour MP Michael Foster's Private Member's Bill to outlaw fox-hunting.

Cindy Milburn, spokeswoman for the Campaign for the Protection of Hunted Animals said: "This shatters the claim from the pro-hunt lobby that they command the support of those who participate in angling and leisure riding. Anglers and riders are as opposed to hunting with dogs as the rest of the British public." John Kelly, editor of *Angling Times*, added: "I know from the many letters received by my office that a lot of anglers disagree with hunting and disassociate themselves from it ... Angling is a country pursuit and inevitably there are anglers who also take part in hunting. But this survey suggests these people are very much in the minority."



### HEALTH

#### Kidney patients dying needlessly

At least 500 patients are dying unnecessarily of kidney failure each year because there are too few kidney machines to go round.

A report by the Renal Association published today says that although the number of transplants compares well with other countries "the uptake of dialysis facilities remains well below the desirable level". It says 80 new patients a year per million population need treatment but a health department report in 1996 found only 69.3 per million were getting it and in some districts the figure fell to 40. It says pressure on clinics is leading to "clinical compromise" with patients being given dialysis only twice a week, so more can be accommodated, instead of the more usual three. — Jeremy Lawrence, Health Editor

#### TOURIST RATES

Australia (dollars)	2.33	Italy (lira)	2,862
Austria (schillings)	20.29	Japan (yen)	205.21
Belgium (francs)	59.69	Malta (lira)	0.63
Canada (\$)	2.33	Netherlands (guilders)	3.25
Cyprus (pounds)	0.84	Norway (kroner)	12.06
Denmark (kroner)	11.07	Portugal (escudos)	294.21
Finland (markka)	8.85	Spain (pesetas)	244.11
France (francs)	9.66	South Africa (rand)	7.77
Germany (marks)	2.90	Sweden (kroner)	12.88
Greece (drachmas)	458.44	Switzerland (francs)	2.34
Hong Kong (\$)	12.25	Turkey (lira)	339,905
Ireland (punts)	1.15	USA (\$)	1.60

Source: Thomas Cook  
Rates for indication purposes only

## ZITS

by Jerry Scott & Jim Borgman 7.30 FOR 8

by Chris Priestley



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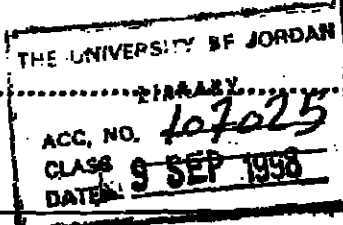
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## Ripples still spreading from Bloody Sunday

In a small house in a small Catholic estate in the killing fields of north Belfast, far from Londonderry and yesterday's Bloody Sunday commemoration, a father and mother sit and talk about what that event did to their family.

They wanted to explain but they did not wish to be identified. Although it was 26 years ago its effects reverberate to this day. Just two weeks ago, the life of their 11-year-old paper boy was threatened, an act which they think can be traced back to that grim day in Londonderry.

Their son Brendan was 17 when the paratroopers opened fire. Three days later, according to his father Jack, Brendan and two close friends, also teenagers, travelled into a republican stronghold and joined the IRA.

This act went against decades of family tradition. In the Second World War, Jack's father had served with the RAF in the African desert, fighting through Sicily and into Italy. One of Jack's uncles served with the Royal Artillery while another was killed in Italy in the closing stages of the war.

Jack himself served in the Territorial Army and then the Ulster Defence Regiment. "This was a non-political family," he said. "We never talked politics. Irish history never meant anything to us. We watched Bloody Sunday on the television but we never discussed it."

But three days later his son was in the IRA. According to Jack: "The three boys were as thick as thieves - whatever one did the others would do too."

Some 10 weeks later, there was an explosion at a lock-up garage at the edge of the little estate. Since then there was little local IRA activity, many at first assumed it was a loyalist bombing.

Jack recalled: "I didn't know anybody was killed until I was told there was flesh over the road and on the roofs. It was a cold April day, there were pieces of flesh and bone all over the place, and the steam was rising off it all. When Brendan didn't appear for his evening meal that's when we started to worry, and then it was confirmed. The police and a priest came down, and they had a piece of shirt with them. It was Brendan's favourite shirt: he died in it."

The next morning Jack was taken by police to the Belfast mortuary. More than 25 years on there was still shock in his voice as he re-lived the experience. "Under the first sheet was the top half of one of the lads, just the upper torso, all covered in cement dust. Under the next sheet there was nothing recog-

BY DAVID  
MCKITTRICK

nisable at all, nothing, just a heap of flesh and an evil smell. The next one was the same, a big tray, a big steel tray. The only identifiable piece of a human being was a human tongue sitting on the top of it all. That memory hasn't left me. The smell sticks in your mind."

Jack and his wife were insistent that the three teenagers were not working on a bomb in transit. By making discreet inquiries, he said, he had discovered that the three had been ordered by the IRA to remove gelignite which was in a dangerous condition.

They refused to allow any paramilitary trappings at their son's funeral. A senior republican appeared at their home to pay his respects. Jack recalled: "He was commiserating with us. I told him to fuck off. He had all this patter about the three volunteers and all. I said, 'Fuck

off, they're three dead volunteers now, they're no use to anybody'."

The families of the other teenagers also had no republican connections. But the explosion branded the little estate as a centre of IRA activity, and loyalists went for it.

The father of one of the teenagers, who worked as a cleaner at the High Court in Belfast, realised he was being stalked as he went to work. He gave up his job, and died soon afterwards. Later, in 1972, a brother of the other teenage IRA member was walking home after work when loyalists shot him dead.

In 1974, two years after Bloody Sunday, five young people from the estate were in a car driving to their work in a nearby factory when loyalist gunmen stepped in front of it and opened fire.

Jack related: "It was a two-door Ford Anglia. The two lads in the front were able to scramble out and run but the three in the back were just stuck there, and they kept firing and firing." A 16-year-old youth from the estate, who was in the back seat, was killed. Also in the back seat was Jack's daughter Margaret. She died a week later. The third person in the back seat was another girl whose brother had died in the garage explosion.

Although she was hit by twelve bullets she survived. She married, but in 1983 her husband was shot dead by loyalists. It was their son, who is around 11 years old, whose life was threatened a few weeks ago.

Jack summed up as his wife looked out the window: "That's why I say Bloody Sunday is still an ongoing thing. We are three families, and each of us had another death resulting from the deaths of the lads in that explosion. How many other sons like mine joined the IRA after Bloody Sunday? Bloody Sunday was the pebble in the pool and the ripples went out. And they're still going out."



Across the generations: A child holding a bunch of flowers at the Bloody Sunday memorial service yesterday in Londonderry. Fourteen Catholics were shot dead by the Army 26 years ago. Photograph: Reuters

## 1 million face £100 fine for late tax

More than 1 million self-employed taxpayers who failed to get their tax returns in by Saturday's deadline will be fined £100 each this month and face the prospect of interest and surcharges on the tax they owe. But the Inland Revenue has admitted many will have to appeal to lift fines which should not legally be levied.

Fines of £100 each, plus interest at 9 per cent on tax due, will be sent by the end of February to the estimated 1.3 million taxpayers who have failed to send in tax returns and any payment due by Saturday's self-assessment deadline.

Taxpayers who by the end of February have still failed to pay can also be hit by a 5-per-cent surcharge on their tax bills. If the Revenue believes they are deliberately avoiding payment, it can levy fines of up to £50 a day. The Revenue has admitted that a substantial proportion of the self-employed - those with little or no tax liability for last year - will face the £100 fine even though it cannot legally be levied.

Under the Taxes Management Act of 1970, the Inland Revenue is barred from levying fines where the tax owed is less than the level of fine. This will be the case for hundreds of thousands of self-employed who either earned very little or got their tax liability down to less than £100. Taxpayers who believe they have been fined unfairly have 30 days to appeal from the date of being fined. Tax returns must be submitted before an appeal can be considered. Final figures for the number of taxpayers who missed Saturday's deadline will be issued early this week, but it is widely estimated that up to 1.3 million taxpayers have missed it, potentially netting the Revenue £130m.

— Andrew Verity

## Barristers attacked for price-fixing as think-tank calls for silk cut



Silky skills: Leading QCs include (from left) Andrew Park, George Carman, Gordon Pollock and Elizabeth Gloster

The system of having Queen's Counsel - or silks - should be abolished because it only exists so barristers can charge higher fees, claims a solicitor writing for a right-wing think-tank. Michael Sreeter, Legal Affairs Correspondent, looks at the case for the prosecution.

For generations the letters QC have held a certain mystique for the general public. The successful drama series about barristers starring John Thaw - *Kavanagh QC* - even contained them in its title.

But according to a report called *Silk Cut*, published by the Adam Smith Institute today, the purpose of such an imposing title is little more than as a price-fixing ring which raises legal fees for the rest of us.

In a damning attack on a 400-year-old tradition, the document says the existence of silks has become "untenable". It says:

"In practice the opinion of silk is often endowed with a prestige which does not necessarily correspond with its value. There is often little to distinguish the silk's opinion from that of a competent junior."

The report says that the Lord Chancellor Lord Irvine has criticised excessive fees for barristers, with some earning well over £1m a year, and gives an example of a legally aided criminal trial, comparing the fees for different barristers. For a four-day hearing for a manslaughter case, a silk would receive £5,365 from legal aid while a junior would receive £2,683 for the same work.

It says big firms of solicitors have complained about QCs charging £750 an hour for commercial work and adds: "A retainer for silk of £40,000 is not uncommon, with a daily 'freshener' of £2,000 a day."

The number of QCs - around 900 - has stayed at about 10 per cent of the total number of barristers (they are King's Counsel under a king). The report, by retired solicitor Peter Reeves, criticises the lack of openness surrounding the appointment of QCs, formally by the Queen but on the rec-

ommendation of the Lord Chancellor.

The barrister first has to make a formal application which goes through a lengthy but secretive selection process known as the "silk round". Most QCs are appointed between the ages of 38 and 50 with the main qualification being a "recognition of prowess in advocacy", says the report. In practice the only real difference for a new QC is the chance to make more money, it adds. "Literally overnight silk are placed in a position to charge far more than junior counsel who may be equally skilled."

It concludes that "as time passes the only alternative is to abolish" QCs, who were first known as "silks" in the 19th century because of the shininess of their gowns.

The Bar Council said the attack was unfair. Nigel Pascoe QC, chairman of the Bar's public affairs committee, said all professions had a career ladder, and said the QC system recognised ability in the same way as the appointment of a hospital consultant.

*Silk Cut: Are Queen's Counsel necessary?* £16, Adam Smith Institute, 23 Great Smith Street, London SW1P 3BL.

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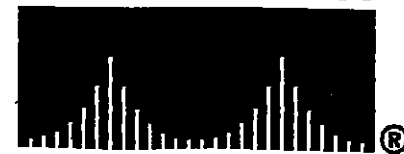
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Red star: The violinist Vanessa-Mae performing in Leicester Square in London yesterday to launch celebrations for the Chinese New Year. Her performance included "The Happy Valley Overture", which was written for the handover of Hong Kong last year. Photograph: Rui Xavier

## Ministers declare war on drunk drivers

Persistent drink-drivers could face heavier fines and longer prison sentences under proposals to be published by the Government today. The measures, designed to cut road deaths, will be accompanied by a new one-pint limit for drivers. *Fran Abrams, Political Correspondent, looks at the detail.*

Random breath tests and an increase in the current maximum six-month prison sentence or £5,000 fine will be among the options laid out in a consultation paper today.

The measures are aimed at preventing some of the 500 deaths caused by drunken drivers every year in Britain.

In addition to plans to cut the limit from 80 milligrams per 100 millilitres of blood to 50 milligrams – the equivalent of about one pint for the average person – they also hope to persuade heavier drinkers not to drive.

While some research has suggested that the 540 road

deaths related to alcohol last year were mainly caused by people well over the limit, police believe that cutting the minimum could help.

Last night, officials stressed that the document would be "consultative," and would set out a range of options.

However the Deputy Prime Minister, John Prescott, confirmed yesterday that the Government was considering a two-tier system of penalties with lesser punishments for people caught with between 50 and 80 milligrams of alcohol in their blood.

Although Britain did well in comparison with other countries, ministers were hoping to find ways of cutting the death toll further, he said in a BBC interview.

"These proposals ... are looking at the principle of a two-tier system where it could be in one case the one pint you are talking about, toughening up those kind of regulations, but allowing for some sensitivities in the court to allow discretion," he said.

Mr Prescott hinted that he favoured a one-pint limit, saying he had always backed tougher regulations on drink-driving.

"I believe and evidence

tends to show in other countries that if you are tougher you can reduce these deaths. I think that's a worthwhile objective and I think the public would agree with us. But we are putting out a consultation document so people can give us their views," he said.

The Association of Chief Police Officers, the British Medical Association and safety groups have all backed a lowering of the limit. Other European countries including France, the Netherlands, Belgium, Greece and Finland all have a 50mg limit while Portugal has 40mg and Sweden 20mg.

However drivers' organisations and a sensible drinking group funded by the drinks industry have suggested that a lower limit is not the way forward.

Jean Coussins, director of the Portman Group, said research showed wider police powers and more rigorous enforcement of the regulations was the best way forward.

"What we do know absolutely for sure is the vast majority of the deaths in this country are caused by people already two or three times and more over the limit," she said.

## Britain braced for flood of genetically-altered food

The food industry has bowed to pressure from American agro-chemical giants and called off attempts to stop a vast increase in genetically-modified food coming into Britain. By the end of next year almost all our imported soya will be bred to resist weed-killers. *Fran Abrams found deep fears among consumer groups.*

At a meeting with the agriculture minister Jeff Rooker last month, the British Retail Consortium announced that it was giving up the fight for modified soya to be separated from non-modified varieties. Supermarkets will now go ahead with a labelling scheme and a publicity drive to persuade shoppers the food is safe.

The Consumers' Association attacked the decision, arguing that it plunged the whole nation into uncharted territory.

Julie Sheppard, the association's public affairs officer, was at last month's meeting. "If you don't have segregation you won't be able to trace genet-

cally-modified ingredients in foods, and if you can't trace them how are you going to monitor them?" she asked.

Soya is used in 60 per cent of processed goods, ranging from chocolate to baby food. At present only a quarter of the soya that comes to Britain from the United States, our main supplier, is modified. The proportion will increase to 60 per cent this year and 90 per cent next year.

Last night Mr Rooker admitted the Government had "missed the boat" on the issue and said if Labour had been in power 18 months ago it might have been able to take a stronger line in calling for segregation of the products. However it had been able to insist that foods containing them were labelled.

He has asked officials to look for ways to monitor the foods despite the difficulties in doing so.

"We need surveillance, monitoring and research so that we can assist consumers in having information and keep watch for any remote problem with these foods," he said.

Norman Baker, the Liberal Democrat MP for Lewes, argues that the Government should back a test case to es-

tablish Britain's right to insist on the segregation of genetically-modified goods.

"Nobody is being asked whether they want this. It is a hidden revolution which we have not voted for," he said.

Ann Grain, spokeswoman for the British Retail Consortium, which represents 90 per cent of all UK retailers, said it would prefer modified grain to be separated but now planned to label all food containing soya as having the modified kind in it.

"The difference is that in the States they trust the Food and Drug Administration. Over here, because of the crises we have had there is a general distrust. Retailers have got to gain consumer trust on this," she said.

Some food chains are resisting the moves, though. Iceland, the freezer store chain, has announced it will buy non-modified soya from remaining sources in the US. A group of 44 wholefood retailers have started a "Wholefoods Against Genetix Foods" campaign.

Iceland's chairman Malcolm Walker, a long-term member of Greenpeace, said he had had hundreds of letters from customers who were "confused and concerned" about the issue.

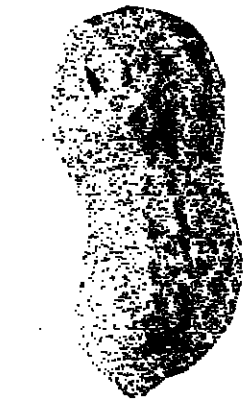
## Shoppers to check out supermarket scanners

Customers could soon be using handheld "smart scanners" to check information on items as they shop at one supermarket chain. *Charles Arthur, Science Editor, reports.*

It's just another day at the supermarket: you walk in, pick up a handheld scanner for the bar codes on the produce, and start walking around. Before you begin putting items in your trolley, though, you tell the scanner to alert you if you buy baby food containing peanuts – as your child is allergic to them – or adult foods with high fats, as you're on a diet.

As you go round, the scanner will warn you if you try to buy peanut butter, and keep a count of the calories you have purchased for yourself.

Such "smart scanners" may sound like a futuristic fantasy, but Sainsbury has already laid the groundwork for that system, and could implement it within the year if enough customers demand it.



Scanners could warn if foods contain peanuts

The existing scanners simply read the bar code and total the cost of goods collected. They were first introduced by Safeway in July 1995 at a store in Wales. Sainsbury introduced them in November 1996, and now offers them in 24 stores. Each has a radio frequency connection to a computer in the store: when the in-built laser scans a code it queries the computer, which sends back the relevant price information.

Sainsbury is already planning to double the number of

stores with handheld scanners, adding another 25 stores this year of its total of 388 outlets.

However, scanners have two disadvantages: every chain in the highly competitive supermarket business has now introduced them, and so far they only offer one feature – the price and total of goods. They do not even save customers time because it takes more time to scan individual items while collecting them than to move them past a scanner when you have your load.

But Sainsbury's computer department is excited about the possibilities of adding new functions and information to the existing system. Jill Lucas, the development manager, said: "The sky's the limit. The scanner could beep for allergy-inducing foods, or for high-fat foods when someone's on a diet."

The obstacle to implementation is getting enough information into the store's central database. However, a Sainsbury spokeswoman said: "The technology exists to define all sorts of things. The next step would be to find out what our customers actually want."

# Nicky.

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# Cook's wife hits at media over sex row

Robin Cook's estranged wife joined a parade of Cabinet ministers yesterday in calling for an end to the "trivial" media focus on their break-up and his relationship with his secretary, Gaynor Regan. *Fran Abrams, Political Correspondent, says that with war looming in the Gulf, the stories are likely to fade of their own accord.*

After weeks of pressure from Conservatives and some newspapers over Mr Cook's relationship with Ms Regan, Mrs Cook's patience appears to have snapped.

In a statement yesterday afternoon she said: "The stories currently running in the press with regard to the Foreign Secretary are trivial and should be laid to rest so that he can get on with his job, which he does well."

"We have reached an amicable settlement with regard to the divorce and now wish to look to the future and not the past," she said.

The statement followed remarks by Mrs Cook, published in yesterday's *Sunday Times*, that the Foreign Secretary was "not a person I know any more."

She was reported as saying his recent remark that he had known more happiness in recent months than he could remember was "a cruel slight."

"I think it's just to put a spin on it, to make it look good - that this business is the result of mad, passionate love, whereas it wasn't really, it was the making of a bad situation."

"I think if nothing had been

found out he would be going along stringing the two of us along," she said.

Yesterday no fewer than three Cabinet ministers defended Mr Cook. On the BBC's *Breakfast With Frost* programme the Deputy Prime Minister, John Prescott, said he had spoken to the Foreign Secretary to give him his support. The saga should not divert attention from more important issues such as Iraq, he added.

"I've had talks with Robin; so many of our ministers have as well. I mean these are matters that are private issues, they cause great concern and of course you want to give support to colleagues... It's a price you pay for being in public life, unfortunately," he said.

George Robertson, the Defence Secretary, said there was no question of Mr Cook being "unfocused" on his job.

"I frankly don't think that it is right that we should be diverted by matters which everyone will consider to be of minor detail at this important time for Britain and the world," he said.

Chris Smith, the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport, said he believed Mr Cook would continue to do a good job as Foreign Secretary for a long time to come.

"Of course we have to make sure that every government ministry is acting with proper probity and that the right procedures are being followed and that we're being honest in our dealings with the public."

"But beyond that, let's get serious about the important things," he said.

Aides to Mr Cook were also letting it be known that he had received strong support from the Chancellor, Gordon Brown. Despite past differences the two men had a drink and a chat together last week, they said.



How it was: A shopper collecting her Co-op 'divi', above, and queues of people waiting for their bonus, top. That society is to join the supermarket loyalty card bandwagon with a new dividend payment card

## Shoppers set to reap dividends as Co-op revives old tradition



Shoppers used to queue round the block for it. For some, it was a lifeline; for others a special treat, a few extra pennies to spend on their favourite luxury. And now it's back.

The Co-op dividend - or "divi" as it was better known - is to be re-introduced into more than 600 stores up and down the country from today.

First introduced in 1844 by the Rochdale Society of Equitable Pioneers, the dividend was a payout given to customers as a percentage of an individual Co-op's profits. Today, thanks to new technology, it will be more like a bonus loyalty scheme which will pay back up to 5 per cent of customers' spending.

The original divi died out among individual Co-operative wholesale societies in the 1960s and 1970s to be replaced by Co-op stamps, which were in turn discontinued during the 1980s.

The latest scheme, which is sure to cause anxiety among the bigger supermarket chains, whose loyalty schemes have only a 1 per cent return, has been made possible by check-out technology that automatically records transactions in a member's account.

Pilot schemes in Scotland and Northern Ireland have

been enormously successful. In less than a year, 500,000 Scots signed up for the scheme and shared £5m in paybacks, either in the shopping vouchers or cash.

In Northern Ireland, 185,000 customers have been given £2m back.

And, because the returns are measured in whole pounds, customers can choose either to roll over spare cash to the next six-monthly payout or donate it to local community schemes. So far, on the pilot schemes, customers have given £320,000 to local charities.

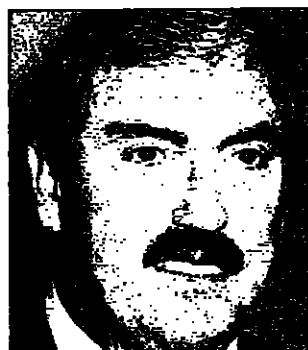
John Bowes, general manager of the Co-operative Wholesale Society, says it is rare for customers to get a full 5 per cent back, but he added: "In practice, we have found the average is 2 per cent, which is still double that of any other retailer's scheme."

"As one of Britain's best-loved shopping traditions, the divi has inspired many imitators, but with the help of new technology, the Co-op is putting the divi back where it belongs - into the pockets of our customers and into the community," said Mr Bowes.

— Steve Boggan

## British Aerospace chief's Mayfair flat linked to fixer in Saudi arms deal

The chief executive of British Aerospace is living in a luxury Mayfair apartment linked to a Middle Eastern businessman who helped the company clinch a £15bn arms deal with Saudi Arabia. BAe told *Jan Burrell* that Sir Richard Evans had done nothing wrong.



Good friends: Sir Richard Evans and Wafic Said



a night there." One day Mr Said arrived with the BAe chief. "Mr Said told me Mr Evans would be living in the flat. The two men were obviously good friends," said Mr Allworth.

Alex Sanson, a former BAe marketing director, told the paper Mr Said played a pivotal role in Al-Yamamah.

"Evans was one of the people Wafic would want to suck up to."

The flat is owned by a company called Knightsbridge Enterprises which took out a 99-year lease on it in June 1987. The company is registered in Panama but was initially run from Mr Said's offices at 49 Park Lane. The flat's affairs are now handled by Keirs and Co, a firm of solicitors in London. Around the time Sir Richard moved to the flat, Mark Thatcher, who has also been linked to the Al-Yamamah deal, moved to a £1m house in Eaton Terrace, Belgravia. It was owned by a Panamanian company, Formigol, also registered at 49 Park Lane. Mr Said's business address.

BAe was the prime contractor in the 1986 Al-Yamamah deal, under which it supplied the Saudis with Tornado and Hawk aircraft as part of a package which included guns, bombs and electronics from other contractors. In return, Britain received £15bn of Saudi oil.

Wafic Said, a controversial Syrian-born fixer and friend of Mark Thatcher, son of the former prime minister, played a key intermediary role in the deal. Al-Yamamah was the making of Sir Richard Evans, BAe's chief executive. It helped

him on his way to a knighthood and a salary package in excess of £500,000. He and Mr Said also became good friends.

Yesterday an *Observer* report said Sir Richard was living in a penthouse flat in Rosebery Court, Mayfair, which is owned by a secretive Panamanian company run until recently from Mr Said's offices in Park Lane. BAe said Sir Richard leased the flat. "It's very simple," said a spokesman. "Dick Evans leases a flat, which he pays for. He does not own the flat. He leases it and he pays the

money to a law firm. It's a private matter."

Sir Richard, who has lived at Rosebery Court for 10 years, told the *Observer* he had no idea of Mr Said's links to the flat. But Charles Allworth, former concierge for the 22 flats, valued at £750,000 each, told the paper in an affidavit that the apartment occupied by Sir Richard had been owned by the Syrian. "Wafic Said had the keys and I knew him to be the owner. He used to come in a big car accompanied by bodyguards. To my knowledge, he never spent

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### Cleric's mock execution

A church minister convicted of terrifying his congregation by faking his own execution received a standing ovation from his parishioners yesterday. The Rev Earlsley White, 69, took the morning service at Park parish church in Uddington, Leicestershire, where a year ago he arranged for his mock assassination to illustrate how missionaries were often killed for preaching. Also in church was Matthew Smith, the SAS soldier whom White asked to be the "gunman". White was found guilty last week at Hamilton sheriff court.

### Biker gang killings

Two men stabbed to death when fighting broke out outside a Rockers Reunion concert in south London, on Saturday night, were members of biker gangs. The two men, both in their thirties, died of their injuries in hospital, and a third was last night "serious but stable". None has been named.

### Lottery winners

Two winners scooped £4.8m each in last night's National Lottery jackpot. The winning numbers were 40, 46, 17, 30, 22, 48, with the bonus number 10.

### DAILY POEM

#### Sic Vita

Henry King

*Like to the falling of a star;  
or as the flights of eagles are;  
Or like the fresh spring's gaudy hue;  
Or silver drops of morning dew;  
Or like a wind that chafes the flood;  
Or bubbles which on waters stood;  
Even such is man, whose borrowed light  
Is straight called in, and paid to night.*

*The wind blows out; the bubble dies;  
The spring enfolded in autumn lies;  
The dew dries up; the star is shot;  
The flight is past; and man forgot.*

Our Daily Poems until Wednesday come from the latest, 39th batch of Poems on the Underground, which will appear in London Tube carriages from this week. The seventh edition of the *Poems on the Underground* anthology will soon be published in paperback by Cassell (£4.99).

هكذا من الأصل



**The Government is to use the UK presidency of the EU to clamp down on zoos which expose animals to cruelty. Ian Burrell says that although conditions in British zoos may have improved, caged animals in other parts of Europe still suffer in dreadful conditions.**

The UK is one of only five countries with laws designed to protect captive animals. British ministers will be armed with the alarming findings of an investigation by the Royal Society for the Protection of Animals which found cruelty at zoos in Spain, Italy, France, Holland and Belgium. Their in-

spectors discovered captive animals in a distressed condition, many displaying psychotic behaviour or "zoochosis", pacing, rotating their heads and begging for food.

The RSPCA found distressed tigers pacing in the cramped enclosures of Limburgse Zoo at Genk in Belgium. Another was seen walking up and down on a raised plateau in Parc Zoologique, Paris. The tiger had little room to exercise but was tantalisingly in direct view of prey species. Staff at the Menagerie du Jardin des Plantes, Paris, had placed many animals in direct view of predators, such as water deer watched by wolves, and muntjac deer by large cats.

The RSPCA also found rhinos, leopards, elephants, baboons, pumas and monkeys in a distressed state in many zoos. The report will be submitted

to the EU Environment Council ahead of its meeting on 23 March. Britain, which will chair the meeting, will be seeking to use its position to introduce a tough licensing and inspection system.

The UK has a high reputation for animal welfare with public opinion shifting in the past 20 years as television wildlife documentaries have shown animals in their natural habitats.

There are some positive signals of a will for change. Last Thursday, MEPs voted for a major shake-up in zoo standards.

The European vote may have been influenced by conditions at a squalid Belgian zoo, a few miles from the European Parliament, which was temporarily closed two years ago after it was found to contain more than 2,000 injured and starving animals.

**Ministers will today celebrate the recovery of 73 schools which were once labelled failing by inspectors. Judith Judd, Education Editor, explains why Stephen Byers, the school standards minister, is holding a House of Commons reception for the school heads.**

2 per cent of primary and 2 per cent of secondary schools.

A spokeswoman for the National Union of Teachers said: "It is clear that with appropriate management and support every school can do well."

But she rejected the policy of naming and shaming as "kicking schools when they are down. It demoralises teachers and makes it harder for the newly-appointed head to turn the school round."

### List of failing schools now recovered

Teachers attacked the Government for its decision to "name and shame" failing schools. To day, education ministers aim to prove that they are as anxious to applaud as to criticise by "naming and acclaiming" schools which have been turned round. Ministers want to avoid the mistake of the previous government which failed to win teachers' support for its reforms because of persistent attacks on the profession.

Their announcement comes on the eve of the publication tomorrow of the annual report by Chris Woodhead, the Chief Inspector of Schools, which shows that schools are improving.

Mr Byers said: "Last year, the Government was criticised for naming and shaming 18 failing schools. We said that where we found failure we would be open about it. We also said that we would celebrate success."

Mr Woodhead is expected to point that rising standards are in evidence not only in better test and examination results but also in the classroom observations of his inspectors.

As usual, his report will list more than 100 schools which have won "Oscars of Excellence" from inspectors. For the first time, there will also be a list of schools once judged failing or in need of special measures, but which have been given a clean bill of health.

However, the report will also show that the percentage of schools being failed by inspectors from Mr Woodhead's Office for Standards in Education, remains at around

All Saints Primary, Rochdale; Brookfield Special, Gloucestershire; Brent Primary, Brent; Brancaster Primary, Norfolk; Breaze Hill School, Oldham; Broadlands Community College, Bradford; Brookside Special, Derby; Broadwood School, Bradford; Cawston Primary School, Norfolk; Cande Primary School, Sheffield; Dalton Junior School, Kirkcaldy; Earlsmead Junior School, Haringey; Eden's G Olds Primary, Ergham; Elm Grove Primary, Hull; Forest Gate Primary, Northamptonshire; Fred Nicholson Special School, Norfolk; Garston Primary School, Norfolk; George Mason's School, Somerset; Griffin Manor Special, Greenwith; Hidding Primary, Norfolk; Holyhead Primary, Swansea; Howkeld Primary, Norfolk; Huntsdon Infant School, Norfolk; Kingsley Junior School, Solihull; Lea County Infant School, Berkshire; Lea Green Special School, Wiltshire; Lilian Baylis School, Dorset; Littleford Secondary, Dorchester; Mayville Infants School, Waltham Forest; Morningdale Primary, Haringey; Mount Pleasant Primary School, Wirrigle; Primary School, Northcumbria; Northcote Secondary School, Wolverhampton; Pinewood Primary, Stoke-on-Trent; Priory Primary, East Sussex; Rye Primary School, Leamington; Roundhorn Primary, Oldham; Stratford Gift Secondary, Newham; St John's Primary School, Southend; St Paul's Infant Primary, Redbridge; St Ann's GM Primary School, Sheffield; St Joseph's Junior, Brent; St George's Primary, Warwick; St Malachy's Catholic Primary School, St Mary's Junior, Walsingham; St James' Primary, Shropshire; St Francis Primary, Gloucestershire; Shaw Park Primary, Hull; St George's Primary, Wandsworth; Skized Row Primary, Milton Keynes; St Andrew's, Derbyshire; St David's GM Secondary, Lincolnshire; St Mary's & St Joseph's Primary, Lancashire; St Barnabas & St Paul's Primary School, Lancashire; St James' Primary School, Hampshire; St Matthias Primary, Hackney; Tamarside Secondary, Devon; The Drive Primary, Cambridgeshire; The Phoenix Secondary, Cambridgeshire; The Three Virgins Highfield Special, Wigan; Ureford Primary School, Wigan; Victoria Primary School, Birmingham; Welsh House Farm Special School, Surrey; Watlington Special School, Lewisham; Worsley Mesnes Primary, Wigan; Worsley Mesnes Community Col-

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Wetlands: Flooded farmland in the Isle of Sheppey, Kent. The government is to pay farmers to turn reclaimed land back to marshland

Photograph: David Rose

## Tide turns as farmers switch fields to marsh

For hundreds of years, farmers have been draining Britain's marshes and bogs to bring them under the plough. Governments have spent millions in the post-war years subsidising their ditch digging, pipe-laying and pumping in order to produce more and more food.

Today is World Wetlands Day, and Britain's leading environmental groups are using the occasion to decry the huge loss of the nation's marshlands - and the birds, insects and plants which rely on wet places.

But the tide is starting to turn. The Government is paying farmers to make their land boggy, turning arable fields back into marshy meadows.

This week, Elliot Morley, the farm minister, will announce new grants aimed at creating and conserving boglands in six of the Ministry of Agriculture's 43 Environmentally Sensitive Areas (ESAs). It is part of a gradual move towards greener farming in which, instead of farmers being subsidised to over-produce crops using intensive methods, they are paid to look after fields in a way which conserves landscapes and wildlife-rich habitats.

Altogether, 9,000 farmers within the ESAs have entered into agreements with the Government. For following government instructions they get £27/m

a year in compensation, which works out at £3,000 for the average participating farmer.

The six ESAs earmarked for better bogs and marshes in the latest review are the Breckland of Norfolk and Suffolk, the North Kent grazing marshes, the Test Valley in Hampshire, the Suffolk river valleys, and the Clun grasslands of Devon and the South West of the Peak District.

Geoff Newsome, of the ministry's Farm and Rural Conservation Agency, is responsible for the North Kent marshes ESA, encouraging farmers to join in the scheme and touring the flatlands along the south bank of the Thames estuary to find out if they are sticking to their agreements. The aim is to improve conditions for the wildfowl and wading birds which breed there in summer, and to provide a feeding and resting ground for thousands which migrate there for the winter.

"There are new goodies for the farmer to go for," he says. The farmers will be paid to reduce the number of sheep they keep on their fields in spring, when the birds are nesting. There are payments for "microengineering" of ditches and dykes to keep water levels higher, for not using artificial fertiliser and for curbing weedkiller use.

— Nicholas Schoon, Environment Correspondent

## Nuclear dumps to run out of space by 2002, says report

Radioactive waste from Britain's nuclear weapons programme is building up and may soon have nowhere to go, according to painstaking research to be given to the House of Lords this week. Steve Boggan looks at the evidence.

Britain's Atomic Weapons Establishment at Aldermaston will run out of space to store radioactive by-products from the Trident nuclear programme by 2002.

That is the disturbing conclusion of an investigation conducted by Labour MP Alan Simpson and the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament which found Britain's military waste management in a "chaotic"

state. In a report to be given to the House of Lords Science and Technology select committee, they paint a picture of decay and potential danger to the public because of the absence of a nuclear waste disposal strategy following the scrapping of plans for the Nirex deep-waste repository at Sellafield in Cumbria.

Aldermaston has been producing nuclear weapons for almost 40 years, resulting in the

storage on-site of contaminated equipment ranging from old glove boxes, tools and filters to sludge containing uranium and plutonium from liquid treatment facilities.

In the mid-Eighties, the Government recognised the problems caused by the production of about 100 tonnes of intermediate level nuclear waste each year and decided to build three new facilities de-

signed to deal with it - a liquid waste treatment plant called A91, a solid waste treatment facility and a "size reduction" facility to make storage simpler.

However, more than 10 years on, only A91 and a sludge solidification facility have been built, and they are not yet operational. According to figures obtained by CND and Mr Simpson, MP for Nottingham South, Aldermaston had capacity for 4,000 cubic metres of waste but has only 500 to 1,000 cubic metres left.

CND's report, compiled by William Peden, its Parliamentary officer, says: "Current projections show that the ... storage space left at Aldermaston will be filled sometime between 1999 and 2002 - at the latest." And it quotes a confidential National Audit Office report produced in 1986 as saying Aldermaston would run out of storage space by the year 2000.

"... the military have a variety of ad hoc solutions to contain their ever-increasing nuclear waste stockpiles," the CND report says. "Some represent best practice currently available, others represent chaos."

It continues: "At Aldermaston, almost 20 years of mismanagement, dithering and delay has led to essential facilities having to continue operating long past the date they

should have been replaced, nuclear waste being stored in any available building and no clear idea of the true radiological content of much of the nuclear waste currently in storage."

Mr Peden points to a Health and Safety Executive review of Aldermaston in 1994 which found that: "Most of the facilities were not designed with decommissioning in mind. Many of the activities to remove re-

dundant plant and equipment will need to be carried out hands-on, introducing the risk of relatively high doses to workers."

Mr Peden said: "At some point, the Government is going to have to weigh up the dangers posed by the production of nuclear weapons that we don't need against the threat to the local community and to workers who come from that community." Mr Simpson said he

would be calling on the Government to suspend production of further weapons until proper waste management systems were in place.

"We have a very serious problem and if we do not stop the production process until we have found a solution, then we will go from having a problem to having a crisis," he said. "If we produce waste faster than we can deal with it, then the situation is going to get very serious indeed. Dennis Healey once said: 'When you're in a hole, stop digging.' That is a maxim we would do well to follow at the moment."

Last year, during inquiries into waste management at Aldermaston, *The Independent* was assured by the Ministry of Defence that there was plenty of room left for the storage of waste and that none of Aldermaston's disposal plans had relied upon the construction of the Nirex waste repository.

In fact, the NAO report does refer to storage plans being reliant upon the development of such a repository. Aerial photographs of Aldermaston, seen by *The Independent*, show no room for further development of the site except for several sports pitches. The destruction of which would cast the Atomic Weapons Establishment in an increasingly desperate light.

### ALARM AT SELLAFIELD

The dangers of decommissioning old nuclear facilities were highlighted yesterday when it was revealed that 13 workers were involved in a radiation scare as they dismantled equipment at the Sellafield reprocessing plant. Two of the workers are awaiting the results of "biological" tests, which involve examining blood and faeces samples for radioactivity.

According to British Nuclear Fuels, which owns the Cumbrian plant, the alarm was raised earlier this week when a bag containing an old air filter from a plutonium finishing building split, releasing dust and plutonium oxide into the air.

Initial tests showed that 11 of the employees had not been contaminated but it is thought that two had been exposed to the dust. The leak was contained to the building, according to a spokeswoman, and no members of the public were put at risk. "They are not ill or injured or sick," said the spokeswoman. "They were put through a body monitor after the incident and found to be clear, but we are awaiting the results of the biological tests to be sure."

BNFL said yesterday that it would conduct its own inquiry into the incident, in addition to an investigation by the Nuclear Installations Inspectorate, a branch of the Health and Safety Executive.

— Steve Boggan

## BMA issues apology to Bupa after allegations of market-fixing

The British Medical Association is locked in a bitter row with Bupa, the private health insurer, over the price and location of private treatment. Jeremy Laurence, Health Editor, examines the year-long dispute that culminated in Bupa issuing a writ for libel last month.

It was, so far as Bupa was concerned, a step too far. The British Medical Association claimed in its house journal *BMA News Review* last month that any consultant who signed up to Bupa's new Consultant Partnership risked being struck off the medical register for accepting financial inducements that could affect his or her clinical judgement.

Bupa, Britain's largest health insurer, demanded a retraction and, when that was not immediately forthcoming, issued a libel writ. The BMA reluctantly backed down and has

written to its 20,000 consultant members withdrawing the allegations and is to publish an apology.

The dispute has its origins in the state of the private healthcare market which has been in the doldrums since the recession of the late 1980s. Bupa has seen its share of the market slip as competition from rival companies has intensified. The Consultant Partnership is a scheme to hold premiums down - and thus attract new business - by capping consultants' fees and tying them into a network of private hospitals which charge preferential rates. In return, consultants who sign up get a 5 per cent bonus at the end of the year.

Four thousand have done so since the scheme was launched in April last year, in defiance of the BMA, which urged consultants to boycott it. The association argues that in addition to limiting doctors' private earnings - Bupa fees have not risen since 1992, it says - the scheme infringes their clinical freedom. James Johnson, chairman of the BMA consultant's

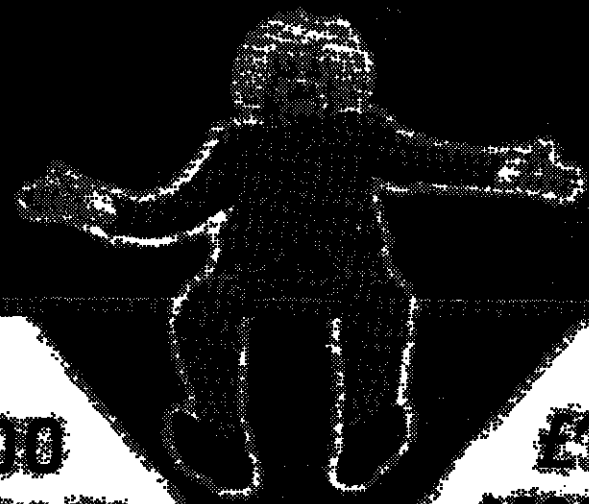
committee, said: "It's a bad deal for consultants. It puts them in a position where they are increasingly working for an insurance company rather than the patient."

Although there are more than 15,000 consultants who do some private practice, the 4,000 already signed up account for more than half the total private work carried out. The BMA fears that if Bupa succeeds in drawing in a majority of the major players it will have control of who does the work, where they do it and how much they get paid. Their choice of hos-

pital will be restricted to the 170 in the Bupa network out of the 800-plus NHS and private hospitals in the country and, ultimately, it fears Bupa may dictate what treatments are provided.

Mr Johnson said: "When the biggest private health insurance company is trying to tie up the hospitals, the consultants and the prices they charge, I think that is worrying." Bupa said in exceptional circumstances the scheme would allow consultants to charge higher prices or refer patients to hospitals outside the scheme.

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# Lewinsky 'traded silence over Clinton in return for job'

Monica Lewinsky, the 24-year-old woman implicated in the Clinton sex scandal, may have bargained her denial of the relationship with the US president for a well-paid job in New York, it was reported yesterday.

If proved true, the claim says Mr Clinton and his close adviser, Vernon Jordan, open to charges that they conspired to suborn perjury and pervert the course of justice - the charges that were at the centre of the sex-scandal allegations before the White House launched its highly effective counter-offensive last week.

The claim of a "job for silence" deal is made in today's edition of *Newsweek* magazine, whose reporters are among the few people to have listened to tape-recordings made secretly by Ms Lewinsky's friend and confidante, Linda Tripp.

The *Newsweek* report adds substance to a theory already circulating in Washington based on the dates on which Ms Lewinsky is said to have met or telephoned the President or Mr Jordan.

According to this "time-line", Ms Lewinsky received a summons to testify in the sexual harassment case against Mr Clinton in mid-December. She was interviewed by *American Express* on 23 December, but was turned down. On 28 De-

cember she is reported to have met Mr Clinton at the White House. She had another interview, with the New York public relations company Burson-Marsteller, two days later.

On 7 January, she signed - but did not release - her sworn statement denying the relationship with the President. The following day she was interviewed by *Revlon* and offered a job soon thereafter. (The offer was rescinded after the story of the alleged affair broke 10 days ago.)

In its latest report, *Newsweek* cites Ms Lewinsky as telling her confidante on tape that she would not allow her written testi-

mony - in which she denies a sexual relationship with Mr Clinton - to go forward unless she obtained a job. "I told him [Vernon Jordan] that I wouldn't sign the affidavit unless I got the job," she says. The tape in question is the "sting" tape made by Ms Tripp at the request of the FBI.

Yesterday, in appearances on television talkshows, Ms Lewinsky's lawyer, William Ginsburg, went out of his way to defend her good name, saying he had known her from childhood and describing as "absurd" a claim by a former lover last week that she had gone to Washington with the express purpose of "seducing the President". The

timing of this claim, just before Mr Clinton was to give his State of the Union address, was seen by some as part of a campaign to discredit Ms Lewinsky.

It was suspected a similar purpose could lie behind disclosures offered yesterday to the Washington media by Christine Regan, a US veteran of the Gulf war, who said she had been paid "by political extremists" to fabricate a sexual liaison with Mr Clinton. Last week Hillary Clinton said the Lewinsky affair was part of a "vast right-wing conspiracy" to oust her husband.

Like most of the other main characters in the drama, the woman at its centre, Ms

Lewinsky, was off-stage over the weekend. Her lawyer said she was preparing to go home to California to spend some time with her father.

Mr Clinton, luxuriating in a 68-per-cent approval rating - the highest of his presidency - was at the presidential retreat of Camp David in Maryland with his daughter, Chelsea, who had returned from Stanford University for the weekend. Mrs Clinton, whose defence of her husband had done so much to turn the tide of suspicion last week, was in Davos for the international economic forum.

— Mary Dejevsky, Washington



Palestinian president Yasser Arafat and US Secretary of State Madeleine Albright after their meeting in Ramallah in the West Bank yesterday to discuss US proposals for breaking the deadlock in the peace process. Photograph: AFP

## Britain and America march towards a battle the Arabs do not want

American and British leaders may like to believe that they have international support for an assault on Iraq. But the Arab states - along with much of Europe - regard it as a war to end all hope of peace. Robert Fisk, Middle East Correspondent, talked to a Jordanian who discussed the crisis with Saddam Hussein only days ago.

When Leith Shubailath met Saddam Hussein a few days ago, the Iraqi leader said to him: "We didn't go into this fight to end it like this". Mr Shubailath, the Jordanian opposition figure who secured the release of scores of Jordanians from Iraqi prisons after a personal meeting with Saddam, found the West's *bête noir* both composed and patient. "He was extremely cool - I couldn't take 2 per cent of what he is taking," Mr Shubailath told *The Independent* yesterday. "Saddam was very philosophical. He knows it is a political decision [to permit arms inspectors to move freely in Iraq] and he will not give in."

Mr Shubailath, it should be added, is something of a Jacobin. Imprisoned by King Hussein of Jordan for allegedly defaming the Royal Family - he criticised Queen Noor of Jordan for weeping at Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin's funeral but not at the murder by Israelis of a Palestinian extremist leader - the Jordanian trade unionist travelled to Baghdad to secure the release of his fellow countrymen after four Jordanians had been hanged for smuggling. King Hussein was not amused - neither at the hanging, nor the intervention of Mr Shubailath.

But the gadfly of the Hashemite monarchy is no less afraid to criticise the West as he is his own king - or "our guy here" as he semi-affectionately refers to King Hussein. "If for seven years, the Americans could not finish their work of arms discovery [in Iraq], then they are lying," he said. "The UN embargo has become a weapon of mass murder. In Baghdad 250 women die in a week. The Iraqi people are being punished for their civilisation and their ability to master [technical] know-how."

That is not quite how the West sees it, least of all those who remember that Saddam used mustard gas against his own Kurdish people at Halabja and against the Iranians in the

1980-88 war. Nor is "civilisation" quite the word the Kuwaitis would use for their brutal occupation by Iraq in 1990. But there is a good deal of hubris in Washington, which the Arab world watches with ever increasing despair. Iraqis, after all, are Arabs. And the Americans who plan to bomb them, are not.

In his State of the Union address, President Bill Clinton claimed that the world was waiting for America to act against Saddam. He was wrong. The world - barring Britain - is in no hurry to see the United States yet again pulverise potentially the richest Arab country. And the Arabs themselves are appalled at the prospect of another onslaught on a state which claims that at least a million of its people have died of starvation or lack of medical facilities.

Western diplomats have been busy playing spin doctor to journalists. It's true that the Arabs are against the "military option", they say, but in secret, within their tents, the sheikhs and kings would like to see Saddam Hussein toppled. They do not want their countries threatened by the dictator of Baghdad. Alas for these rulers, US Defense Secretary William Cohen has already announced that military strikes would not

be intended to topple Saddam. And many an Arab ruler is more worried about the furious response of his own people to a US attack than an offensive against him by Saddam.

Across the Middle East - and in international Arab papers like the Saudi-owned *Al-Hayat* - Arab journalists have been pointing out that an attack on Iraq could only be acceptable if the US forced Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu to abide by the Oslo peace accords - and allow the Palestinians a state. Alas again, Secretary of State Madeleine Albright cancelled her weekend press conference with Mr Netanyahu after another spectacular diplomatic failure: she could not persuade the Israeli leader to halt Jewish settlements or make further substantial withdrawals from the West Bank - the only acts which could persuade Arab rulers to give even covert support to an attack on Iraq.

So America and Britain march alone into war against an Arab nation - much as Britain and France did against Egypt in 1956 - with only the tight-lipped sympathy of France and Germany and the potential hostility of many Arab nations. If Mr Clinton lets slip the missiles of war, it could be America's last punch in the Middle East.

## Lebanese troops seek Scarlet Pimpernel of the Bekaa Valley

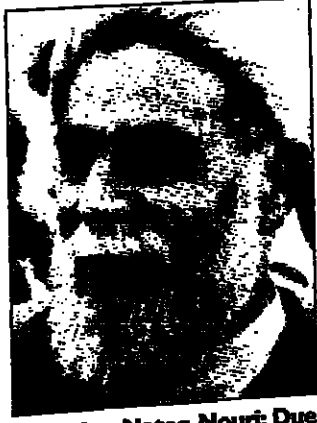
Thousands of Lebanese troops continued to search for the renegade Hizbollah cleric Sheikh Sobhi Tofeili in the Bekaa Valley yesterday after a gun battle in which up to 18 people were killed. But, as Robert Fisk reports from Baalbek, the would be Shia revolutionary may have got away.

The blood of a soldier lay on the rough ground below the religious seminary, thick and fatal, a cap soaked in red beside the dark pool. Did the soldier's mother knit this thick woolen protection for the bitter cold of the Bekaa nights? Was this the place of martyrdom of 1st Lieutenant Jean Webbe, or Sergeant Abdo Haj, or Private Nicolas Rizk? All three Lebanese soldiers died in the battle with Sheikh Sobhi Tofeili's gunmen on Friday night and this infantryman - so the locals said - had been shot in the head.

And then there was the body in the neighbouring house. Shahira Moussa was just 17 when she was hit by a stray bullet during the shoot-out. She lay like an angel in the family sitting room, a startlingly pretty young woman with high cheekbones and fair hair, awaiting burial within the hour.

And there was Khodr Teiss, a former MP who died a few hundred yards from her. He was a Shia cleric - like Tofeili - and wore a turban and brown robes. In the Baalbek city seminary, there was no turban; just a balding head and closed eyes amid the frosted abbeys.

Did he die trying to secure a ceasefire? No one knows. At least eight men and women were killed, and Teiss was buried yesterday in the village of Britel, a hundred cars accompanying the corpse - no journalists at the funeral, the Lebanese army insisted - amid curses against both Sayed and Hizbollah, the Hizbollah leader, and



Ali Akbar Nateq-Nouri: Due to visit Damascus next week

of the bearded cleric - who helped to found the pro-Iranian Hizbollah and then split from the movement to campaign (so he claimed) for the poor of Lebanon's eastern Bekaa valley - regarded the present Hizbollah leader and his backers as traitors.

That was how the Lebanese army viewed Tofeili. The one-time religious student-friend of Ayatollah Khomeini had taken over a Hizbollah school on Friday, refused to leave when the army ordered him out and made his way home to Britel only after eight - some say 18 - men and women had been killed in the subsequent siege. He had split the Hizbollah, infuriated the Lebanese government by his calls for rebellion, and had now enraged Britel with so many tanks and armoured personnel carriers and troops yesterday. Under the cold winter sunshine, the orchard village looked more innocent than the snow-smothered mountains on either side of it. But was Tofeili there? True, it was his home village.

True, he had headed south after the school siege. True, the Lebanese soldiers stood in the cold fields and beside the abandoned garages around the village. But word had it that the bespectacled cleric had slipped away, Pimpernel-like, into some neighbouring hamlet.

Next week, on a pre-arranged visit, Ali Akbar Nateq-Nouri - the speaker of the Iranian parliament, no less - is due to arrive in Damascus. Word had it in the Bekaa yesterday that he might mediate Sheikh Tofeili's

departure from Lebanon. Certainly, Tofeili had been on his mobile phone to the Iranians on Saturday morning.

But in his last interview - to *The Independent*, only hours before the battle - he had expressed his contempt for both arrest and death. No wonder the Hizbollah's spiritual leader, Sheikh Mohamed Radlallah, yesterday appealed to the Lebanese authorities to spare the village of Britel and its civilian inhabitants.

As for Sheikh Tofeili, they seek him here,

## Balloonists drift into danger zone

Undaunted by the threat of US air strikes and risking the wrath of the Baghdad authorities, European balloonists floated over Iraq in their attempt to circle the globe. *Breitling Orbiter 2* flew over Baghdad and on to Iran after diplomatic exchanges involving the neutral Swiss government and the Red Cross. The three-man crew were unable to make contact with air-traffic control in Baghdad and so spent 30 minutes in Iraqi airspace illegally before clearance was given. "American authorities were also informed... and that any US planes in the region should not get alarmed at his presence," said a control-centre spokesman. — AP, Geneva

## Bonn warns Iran

A death sentence passed on a German in Iran for alleged sex with a Muslim could badly damage relations with Tehran, the Foreign Minister, Klaus Kinkel, said. He has appealed to Iran to free Helmut Hofer, 56, a businessman. An Islamic court sentenced him last month for an illicit relationship with a 26-year-old unmarried Iranian identified as Zenaye Moheene, whom he met on a trip. — AP, Hamburg

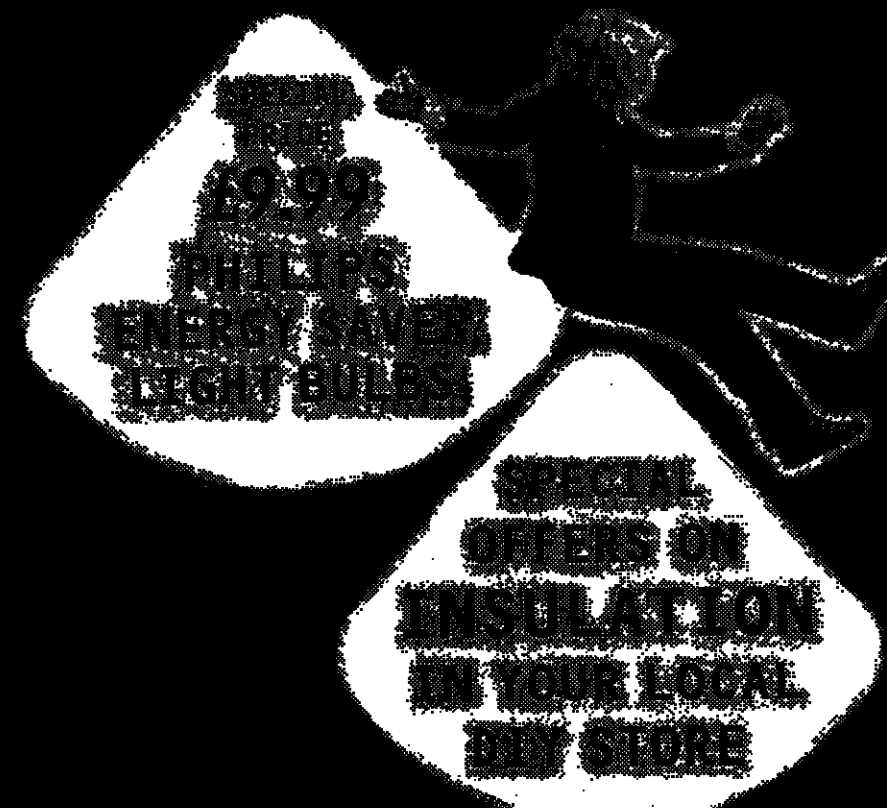
## Papon poser

The lawyer who revealed that the head judge in Maurice Papon's trial is related to Jews the former Vichy official allegedly deported said he will not formally ask him to step down. Arno Klausfeld, representing families of Papon's alleged victims, would leave Jean-Louis Castagnède the responsibility of "deciding himself what he thinks best" to assure the trial will proceed as it should. — AP, Paris

## Ancient tales

Canadian archaeologists unearthed 2,000 papyrus scrolls dating to the era when Rome and Greece ruled Egypt. Gaballah Ali Gaballah, head of the Supreme Council for Antiquities, said they date to the fourth century or earlier and provide information about the political and social life of the period. "It is the most important find of papyrus belonging to the Roman and Greek periods in decades." — AP, Cairo

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## Worse than the mafia: Moscow police who tortured and murdered in crime rackets

There is nothing new about police corruption and brutality in most countries, but in crime-hardened Russia it is positively yawn-inspiring. Yet the sheer scale and gall of the latest alleged cop crimes have appalled even the more cynical observers.

Prosecutors in Moscow are

investigating a gang of law enforcement officials accused of a four-year reign of terror in which they murdered, robbed, tortured and extorted money from businessmen in a manner no different from the gangsters whom they were employed to suppress. The only aspect of their case more horrifying than

their alleged crimes is the membership of the group, whose qualifications will outshine almost every other gang in the annals of violent crime.

It was allegedly led by an officer of the interior ministry's main criminal investigation directorate (GUUR). According to the newspaper *Kommersant*,

it also comprised officers from narcotics, commando, and economic crime units, a dozen cops from the GUUR, a police colonel, and - presumably to unravel any troublesome legal hitches - a lecturer from the ministry's law academy.

Whenever any trouble arose with the full-time crooks in

competing mafias, they reportedly arrested them. And if any honest cop flagged them down when they were *en route* to an armed robbery, they only needed to pull out their police ID.

The gang - whose leader shot himself when the police arrived to arrest him - also appears to have been well versed

in technology and record-keeping. According to the English language newspaper the *Moscow Tribune*, they kept a database of their potential victims - businessmen, drug dealers and assorted mafiosi - and kept a photograph album of those whom they had already tortured, extorted of all their

cash, and finally murdered. Officials say they committed 12 murders in Moscow, where they ran drug and protection rackets, before they were caught.

The case, now awaiting trial, is one of the most graphic examples of corruption in Russia's police force, which led to the arrest of a breathtaking 11,000 law

enforcement officials last year. Last week, Anatoly Kulikov, the interior minister, acknowledged that the problem was undermining public confidence. He and Boris Yeltsin have pledged to clean up corruption in Russia, although progress has been slow.

— Phil Reeves, Moscow

## Germany's jobless stir into action

The swelling army of Germany's jobless will take to the streets this week for the first time in decades, highlighting their plight by marching on Bonn and the big industrial cities.

In an echo of the protests sweeping France, Germany's 4.5 million unemployed are trying to raise their profile with a series of spectacular events, climaxing on election day in September.

Germany has not seen such a mass movement since the war, and it is still questionable whether today's well-heeled jobless can rouse themselves from their torpor. But according to opinion polls, three out of four unemployed are prepared to vent their frustration by joining the protests.

Not since the rise of Hitler have there been so many jobless in Germany. Last month, their number broke through the 4.5 million barrier - nearly 12 per cent of the workforce. Figures due out this Thursday are expected to show that 300,000 were added to the dole queue in January.

Every month, government officials make optimistic forecasts about corners being or about to be turned, only to be confounded a month later. The latest government predictions now concede that the current trend will not be arrested until the spring.

A promise made by Chancellor Helmut Kohl two years ago to halve unemployment by the turn of the millennium seems forlorn. As elections approach, one out of five eastern Germans are out of work, and the recent boom has failed to create openings in the west. Mr Kohl's administration is seen to be paralysed. Proposals for an "Alliance for Jobs" between the government, unions and employers have come to nothing.

The opposition Social Democrats are calling for massive investment in the labour market. "All that costs money is unthinkable," the chancellor retorted this weekend. Indeed, some of the latest rise stems from the abolition of make-work schemes that kept the numbers down. Without such projects, the real figure would be closer to 6 million, argue the unions.

— Imre Karacs, Bonn



On a high: Stilt walkers from Liaoning province in north-east China performing at a fair in Beijing yesterday to mark the Chinese New Year. Photograph: AFP

## Charles stays away from town of fear

Peter Popham reports from Kandy, the ancient town that - following last week's temple bombing - the Prince of Wales will no longer be visiting when he arrives in Sri Lanka for 50th anniversary celebrations.

The entrance porch of Sri Lanka's holiest temple is crammed with silent, watching people. The porch looks out on the temple grounds; since the temple was badly damaged in a bomb blast a week ago, this is the closest the public can get to the building which is a symbol of the nation's sovereignty, and which houses the relic - a tooth of the Buddha - which is held to be Sri Lanka's most important possession.

But the people crammed in here are not looking at the temple but at a woman standing in the front of the porch. She is dressed all in white, and she seems to be in a kind of trance. Holding the national flag in her

right hand, eyes wide, unblinking, malevolently staring, her head snaps spasmodically from side to side as she spits out a convulsive torrent of words, on and on, without pause. From the tone one would guess that she was calling down curses or foretelling frightful disasters. When the Tamil Tigers blew up the Dalada Maligawa temple in Sri Lanka's ancient capital, Kandy, they forced the government to switch celebrations of the 50th anniversary of independence to Colombo. Kandy's colonial-era buildings had been whitewashed for the event, but Prince Charles will not now be coming to this gorgeous lakeside town.

But for the people here, his absence is not their main preoccupation, neither is it fear of more attacks or lost tourist revenue. It is something deeper, more primitive. The woman in the temple porch is giving vent to it. Those watching struggle to explain. "The temple is a very important place. She is very sad and afraid about what has happened to it," a local journalist wrote. "What was hit was the heart of the Sinhala

Buddhist identity and pride... the belief that the Tooth Relic protects the land, gives rain, and acts as the guardian of the people persists to this day."

The tooth - supposedly taken from the Buddha's funeral pyre - was unharmed, but the arrival of Sri Lanka's war in the sacred heart of the old capital has produced a mood of superstitious foreboding unprecedented in the country's bloody decades of freedom. After the explosion, the *de facto* defence minister, Anuruddha Ratwatte, tendered his resignation but the President refused to accept it. The minister refused to withdraw it. This farce matters, because Mr Ratwatte is the government's chief hawk, behind the policy of achieving military victory over the Tigers. The drive to open a land route through the rebel lands of the north to Jaffna was supposed to be achieved by now. Mr Ratwatte's boast was that the first bus would run from Colombo all the way north on Independence Day. It may set off, but is unlikely to have many passengers: dur-

ing fighting around the village of Kilinochchi yesterday on the bus's putative route and only five miles from the Jaffna Peninsula, the government claimed to have killed 300 enemy fighters.

Prince Charles will arrive in a country more bloodily divided than at any time in history. Explaining why he had invited the Prince, the Home Affairs minister, Ratnasiri Wickremarajane, said: "We want him to see how much we have achieved." Sri Lanka has in parts a superficial gloss of prosperity, but with its ubiquitous sandbagged gun emplacements, oil drums full of cement, and soldiers with Kalashnikovs, Colombo has become a vast armed camp. Occasional electric signs flashing reminders of the anniversary are obscured by high steel barricades. Anecdotal evidence suggests the government's tough military line on the Tigers is still popular. Local elections held in Jaffna last week drew desirous turn-outs of 25 per cent due to the Tigers' threat to disrupt voting, but they were completed without major incident.

## Cypriot showdown draws near

Despite powerful urgings from the West and even blunter warnings from Turkey, the Greek Cypriot government of Cyprus seems hell-bent on going through with its potentially explosive plan to install Russian-built S-300 anti-aircraft missiles in the south of the island, whoever wins this month's close-fought presidential election.

Earlier, the 78-year-old incumbent, Glavkos Clerides, seemed to be coasting to victory, but weekend polls now put him neck and neck with the former foreign minister, George Iakovou, for Sunday's first round. This means a second-round run-off on 15 February, in which all will depend on how minor party voters switch their support.

Whatever happens is, however, unlikely to change the prospects for the island as it embarks on arguably its most perilous year since the partition of 1974, during which it will open entry negotiations with the European Union, amid new tensions between its rival patrons, Greece and Turkey.

Mr Clerides again insisted yesterday that the missiles were an essential deterrent. And Mr Iakovou, having once warned that installation of the missiles could "blow up" the situation on the island, now promises that, if elected, he would deploy them even faster than the 18 months foreseen in the deal with Russia. In practice, the campaign has largely turned into a bidding war, as to who can be "tougher on Turkey".

One small comfort is that Ankara, which has threatened to destroy the missiles, or seize them *en route* as the ships carrying them passed through the Dardanelles (thus almost certainly provoking a military conflict with Greece), is now talking less belligerently. But such is the threat to the fragile stability of the eastern Mediterranean that Britain, the EU and the US want deployment put off indefinitely.

An infuriated Ankara is threatening to knit the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus even more fully into Turkey proper - in which case, hopes of the bi-communal, bi-zonal federal settlement for which the UN is working would be dashed, probably for good.

— Rupert Cornwell, Nicosia

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هكذا من الأصل

# SA black business hopes blighted by mining debacle

Nine months ago JCI became South Africa's first black-owned mining house. Now the company is in tatters and its chairman, Mzi Khumalo, a former guerrilla in the ANC's military wing, has resigned. Mary Braid reports from Johannesburg on a black empowerment disaster.

Mr Khumalo's fall from grace has been described as the tragedy of an African Icarus. Eight years ago he was on Robben Island with the ANC's imprisoned leadership. Legend now has it that after his release, on the boat back to the mainland, a comrade asked him what he planned to do. Mr Khumalo, something of an entrepreneur since he began collecting used cans as a child in the townships, said he was going to start a bank.

Four years later he had done just that. Last May he took charge of JCI, one of the country's largest mining houses, in a ground-breaking black empowerment deal with Anglo American. Blacks have political power now but realised where real power lies and that winning the vote will mean nothing if they do not take business by storm. Thus a combination of legislation, political pressure and the need to make up for sins of the past has forced white business to form partnerships, or sell slices of their empires, to blacks.

Much hinged on the JCI deal. It was black business's chance to prove itself. But in nine months the 100-year-old company's value has halved and there are proposals for it to be dismembered and sold to raise enough money to satisfy the shareholders now baying for Mr Khumalo's blood.

There are many reasons why the deal turned sour. Anglo, giant of the white commercial world, received plenty of kudos for leading by example. It also made a 1bn rand (£140m) profit. Mr Khumalo's African Mining Group, it is now clear, paid Anglo too much for JCI. It did not help that the price of gold then went into freefall. Mr Khumalo's lack of management experience and tenuous grasp of the mining industry also contributed.

Whatever the causes, Jimmy Manyi, managing director of the business associ-

ation Black Management Forum, admits the failure is a body-blow for black economic empowerment and may put the brakes on a process which blacks complain is advancing at a snail's pace and is riddled with tokenism. Mr Manyi says the disaster highlights the need for a commission to look at empowerment. "There is no real black empowerment in South Africa. A few (black) individuals are enriching themselves but there is no trickle-down effect."

Tony Twine, an economist with Econometrix, says lack of education, training and business experience is partly to blame for slow progress. But he also admits that, despite positive public pronouncements, established business, like all other bastions of white privilege, is dragging its heels. However, he does not lay all the blame for "tokenism" at business's door. New government regulations require white companies to have black partners before applying for state tenders. As a result, they have appointed blacks to lucrative non-executive positions and a small black elite has formed which sits on a multitude of different boards.

This little group gets rich but generally picks up little hands-on business experience; and the black face on the board buys time for companies reluctant to implement empowerment initiatives at other levels which would increase the number of black middle managers from which successful black chief executives might emerge.

For now the government is caught between a rock and a hard place. Mr Twine argues that since white business will never willingly give up what it has, the solution lies in expanding the economy. The government should then ensure black business gets the largest slice of the extra pie, much as the National Party favoured Afrikaner - against English - business in the 1950s and 1960s after it came to power.

But for the economy to grow the government needs to keep established business on side. Thus it can apply pressure for change, but not too much. Jenny Cargill, an analyst with BusinessMap, says that the current crisis shows that empowerment has run its first leg. She argues that that leg was important because it gave blacks control of a small - but crucial - number of businesses. But deeper change is now called for, she says, and government must keep up the pressure.



Medicine man: Solomon Mahlaba is concerned over the unequal collaboration between Western doctors and traditional healers

Photograph: Andreas Vachalski

## Healers reluctant to share secrets with medical giants

Attempts to pull 300,000 sangomas (traditional healers) into South Africa's hard-pressed health system are going nowhere. Fear that drug companies will steal their potions has the healers dragging their heels. Mary Braid reports.

The Pope beams down on Dr Sarah Mashele's waiting room, sharing wall space with a Native American prophecy about human greed, a warning that smoking causes cancer and a painting of a sangoma chatting to a water serpent.

The bizarre fusion of Catholicism and traditional African beliefs, modern technology and magic, continues in Dr Mashele's consulting room in a Johan-

nesburg tower block otherwise filled with dentists, GPs and chiropodists.

The fax jostles for space with Jesus, leather-bound Bibles and a pile of animal bones which Dr Mashele throws to diagnose complaints. If the bones prove useless the sick close their eyes and select a scripture printed on a fortune cookie-like slip from hundreds filed in a plastic box.

Dr Mashele, the grandchild of a Christian bishop and descendant of a long line of African healers, is at ease amidst this hotchpotch. Illness she explains can be caused by stress, diet or germs. But witchcraft she adds, with a touch of defiance, can also cause sickness. Whatever the cause the answer lies across the corridor in a dark and hallowed room where she grinds herbs and plants for muti (medicine).

Despite the efforts of the old apartheid regime, which dismissed traditional healing as primitive nonsense, some 300,000

traditional healers are estimated to be practising in South Africa today.

More than 80 per cent of the population use them instead of, or as well as, Western-trained doctors. Healers are consulted 90-100 million times a year; every visit costs 100R (£12) in a R10bn industry. The new government has taken a more enlightened approach to traditional African medicine than its Boer predecessor. Struggling to expand health care to the black majority the government realises the benefits of recruiting this large workforce into primary health care. It also wants to subject healers' treatments to scientific tests. For despite the "mumbo jumbo" there is little doubt that some muti works.

But a year after the Medicines Control Council set up a joint group of Western practitioners and African healers to bring the systems together, precious little progress has been made. At the heart of

the delay are concerns about intellectual property rights. Healers fear research institutions and drug companies are poised to steal their knowledge, mass produce their remedies and rake in the bucks.

Solomon Mahlaba, managing director of the African National Healers' Association, is a member of the MCC Western-African medicine group. He is also participating in a related Medical Research Council project at the University of Cape Town in which traditional potions are already being scientifically tested to discover how they work and to produce a register of safe and approved medicines.

But he has his concerns. "This collaboration between Western doctors and traditional healers is unequal. We work with the university, but then everything produced belongs to it. At the moment it is one-way traffic leading straight to the pharmaceutical companies," he said.

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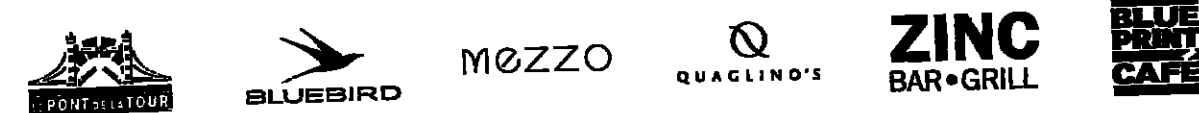
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## Prescott's Earth-saving policy doesn't hold up

In unilaterally setting an aim of cutting carbon dioxide emissions by 20 per cent by 2010, Britain may have inadvertently damaged the cause it is trying to promote, says an expert in atmospheric science who contributed to the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change. Hugh Aldersey-Williams spoke to him.

Sometimes, grand gestures turn out to be just that – gestures. At the Kyoto climate summit last December, the European Union called for 15 per cent cuts in a cocktail of six greenhouse gases including carbon dioxide, increasingly accepted as Man's main contribution to global warming. In the end, it agreed an 8 per cent cut.

Britain, represented at the conference by John Prescott, Deputy Prime Minister and Secretary of State for the Environment, held out for a 20 per cent cut.

Not that his stance was hugely effective. The US, where petrol costs less than a third in real terms what it does in most European countries, took the opposite tack, volunteering to cut emissions by only 7 per cent.

Yet research published in the science journal *Nature* two years ago by a scientist at the US National Center for Atmospheric Research (NCAR) in Boulder, Colorado – one of the world's top centres in the field – suggested that the cautious approach may be the right one for the long term. The scientist is Dr Tom Wigley, and the Kyoto agreement effectively endorses his thinking, seeking to find a middle path between environmental idealism and political and economic reality.

But that is not why Dr Wigley has been making headlines recently. At Christmas, *Nature* reported that he would no longer be participating in the IPCC's regular reviews of research into climate change. His stepping down carries an implied criticism of the increasing bureaucracy surrounding this crucial field of research.

NCAR is keen to play down the story. "He hasn't resigned; he's going to continue to work with and support the IPCC," a spokeswoman said. "It's just that his role has become so time-consuming that he hasn't been able to do the science he wants to do. I have heard the same complaint about time from others involved with the IPCC reports. It does become a pretty overwhelming commitment." Dr Wigley feels that the need now is to get more results rather than write more reports.



Not really in their hands: Children at Kyoto before the climate conference

Photograph: AP

Only then might overwhelming evidence be gathered that rising levels of greenhouse gases actually do increase global warming. Meanwhile, the IPCC report that formed the basis of the Kyoto discussions merely states that the "balance of evidence" is that the human release of carbon dioxide and other gases into the atmosphere is causing global warming.

But what evidence – short of obvious damage to our surroundings – could be produced that would be sufficiently unequivocal to convince hard-line sceptics? At the moment, the doubters and prevaricators are exploiting the fact that two sets of scientific measurements – those taken on the earth's surface and those obtained from

satellites – disagree somewhat.

Dr Wigley believes that setting challenging targets for greenhouse gas cuts could do more harm than good. For one thing, it could simply harden the attitude of already sceptical politicians and industry against change.

More importantly, it could also be a fundamentally bad way of tackling the problem because of the costly disruption caused by demanding rapid and large-scale changes to the way industry, transport and other energy-intensive activities are run.

Even the targets set at Kyoto – modest by the standard of initial demands from environmentalists and the European Union – may be too painful and too focused on short-term change.

Dr Wigley reached his conclusion by projecting hypothetical concentrations of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere and accompanying levels of man-made emissions of the gas using computer models of the global carbon absorption and emission due to all known causes. The graphs showed that carbon dioxide levels could be brought down to the 1990 level of 354 parts per million, or a range of compromise levels above that, by 2150.

Further, they showed that even having "wasted" 10 years between 1990 and 2000 during which time carbon emissions continued to increase on a "business as usual" footing, it is still possible in principle to stabilise the greenhouse gas at any of those levels.

"The point of the illustration was to say not 'let's not do anything', but 'don't despair, we can still get there'," Dr Wigley says.

Now comes the *realpolitik*. Yes, there will eventually have to be substantial and permanent reductions in the emission of carbon dioxide. And yes, the lower we want to stabilise concentrations eventually, the sooner we will have to act.

But having shown that it is possible to achieve a range of desired levels from a variety of initial policies for action, Dr Wigley's co-authors, economists from the Electric Power Research Institute and Battelle's Pacific Northwest Laboratory, then examine the matter from their own perspective. For economic rather than

purely environmental or scientific reasons, their calculations suggest that the best course might be to do rather little at first. "The pathway can be just as important as the concentration stabilisation level in determining the ultimate cost," they write in *Nature*. "Pathways involving modest reductions below a business-as-usual scenario in the early years followed by sharper reductions later on were found to be less expensive than those involving substantial reductions in the short term."

They give three reasons for building up our efforts to reduce carbon emissions gradually rather than immediately launching an all-out assault. The first is simple economics: the further off the expenditure, the less the pain of budgeting for it now. The second recognises that capital equipment used in energy production is long-lived. Time in which to plan for its replacement could make the transition smoother and more affordable. The third is the Micawber option – the hope that our ingenuity will turn up something in the way of energy-efficient alternative technologies.

Some will take comfort from the apparent stay of execution. But Dr Wigley warns against complacency. "Even from the narrow perspective of a cost-effectiveness analysis, our results should not be interpreted as a 'do nothing' or 'wait-and-see' policy."

Which is why Dr Wigley is going back into the laboratory. For scientists the priority now should be to "prove conclusively that there is a substantial anthropogenic climate change effect", he says. "We need to quantify the effect better."

But what has Mr Prescott's bold gesture got us into? "I guess each individual country makes decisions on the basis of their own particular circumstances," Dr Wigley says. "The British government wouldn't be foolhardy, and I don't think they're that subservient to the environmentalists. So they must think there's a good reason. From the point of view of reducing the effect on the planet, what one country does has virtually no effect at all. But in terms of acting as a leader and gaining economic advantage from developing new technologies, there may be long-term benefits although in the short term you might reduce your competitiveness."

There is little advantage in taking a very different view of our predicament from that held in other countries of what is, after all, a global phenomenon. As Dr Wigley observes, "to take the lead on an issue doesn't require going to a real extreme; you can just step a little ahead, and you're still leading." Ten per cent might have done the trick.

## TECHNOQUEST

### When a banana gets fruity

Questions for this column may be submitted by e-mail to [sci.net@campus.bt.com](mailto:sci.net@campus.bt.com)

*Why do bananas change from green to yellow when they ripen?*  
During the ripening process, fruit produces ethene, a gas which permeates the cells of the edible parts. That makes the fibres in the fruit break down so the fruit goes soft. It also converts the starch to sugar, making the fruit sweet, and destroys the chemical that makes the fruit green – chlorophyll – so that other colours can come out. In the banana's case, that colour is yellow. By controlling the gene that switches on ethene production, scientists can dictate how fast, or even if, fruits ripen.

*What is the smallest bone in the body?*  
The stirrup bone, one of the three little bones in the middle ear, is 2.6-3.4mm long and weighs 2.0-4.3mg. It is about the size of a grain of rice.

*Can members of the public name stars?*  
A number of organisations around the world claim to name stars on your behalf. However, none is officially recognised by the International Astronomical Union, hence their naming has no scientific weight.

Apart from the few dozen bright stars named by the ancients, stars are always designated by some alphanumeric system involving their placement in the sky, such as their ordering by position in a zone of declination, by brightness (or by variability of brightness) in a constellation, or simply by their coordinates.

There is one completely valid way to get heavenly things named after you – discover them. Comets and "minor planets" (asteroids) are always named by those who find them – hence the Shoemaker-Levy and Hale-Bopp comets – so get your telescope out and get hunting. The only time members of the public had the chance to name astronomical objects was for features (especially craters) on Venus: all are named after women, so people were asked to nominate their favourite female characters from history or the present day.

*Do wombats have square faeces, and which way do their pouches open?*  
Wombats do, indeed, produce cuboid faecal pellets. They are solitary creatures which live in burrows in Australia, and come out at night to feed mainly on grasses. They mark their territory with splashes of urine – and their strangely shaped fecal pellets. Their pouches, along with those of other marsupials that crawl along the ground, open in the opposite direction to that of a kangaroo: if the wombat was to stand on its back legs, the pouch would open downwards.

You can visit the technoscape World Web site at <http://www.campus.bt.com/CampusWorldPub/ScienceNet>

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Calls cost 50p per minute at all times. Winner picked at random after 11pm on 3rd February 1998. Local Newspaper Publishing rules apply. Editor's decision is final.

## THEORETICALLY ...

### The looming epidemic that may prove worse than Aids

Hepatitis C, the lingering liver disease, could become a bigger killer than Aids over the next two decades, according to medical experts.

"Hepatitis C has emerged from obscurity as a disease familiar to only a few experts to being recognised as a major public health problem world-wide," said Dr Adrian Di Bisceglie, professor of internal medicine at the University School of Medicine in St Louis, Missouri. He and others believe deaths from hepatitis C will triple in the next 20 years. Presently it causes 8,000-10,000 deaths annually.

There is no vaccine, though treatment with interferon can lead to remission. Between 1 to 2 per cent of the population in most developed countries is infected with the virus but the numbers are much higher in some parts of eastern Europe and Africa. In Egypt the rate appears to be around 15 per cent.

#### Start early for perfect pitch

Do you want your child to have perfect pitch? Then line up the violin or piano early on, and hope that your genes are right. Perfect pitch – the ability to hear a tone and identify it at once as C sharp or B flat – takes a combination of genes and early musical training, according to a survey of more than 600 musicians.

In the research nearly all those with perfect pitch had started their music training by the time they were six; the older they were when they began, the less likely to have it. Of those who started before the age of four, 40 per cent had the gift, while only 3 per cent of those who started after 12 did.

But the survey by researchers at the University of California, San Francisco, also found that musicians who reported having perfect

pitch were four times more likely than other musicians to say they had a relative with the ability. That suggests a genetic contribution which runs in the family, the researchers say in a report of their findings published in this month's issue of the *American Journal of Human Genetics*.

#### Go-ahead for animal transplants

Stop xenotransplants? No, there's no need, said the US Food and Drug Administration, which has rejected calls for a moratorium on clinical trials of animal-to-human transplants. There would have to be safeguards and strict supervision, an FDA representative said, but it would not go along with an article suggesting such transplants should wait, which appears in this month's *Nature Medicine*. In the UK,

there is presently a moratorium on xenotransplants, with no set end-date.

#### Minister ashamed

No, not Robin Cook, but Baroness Blackstone, minister in the Department for Education and Employment. Giving evidence to the Commons Select Committee on Science and Technology, she said she had frequently been "ashamed" of the conditions under which university researchers worked, and said unsatisfied people would move abroad unless facilities improved. That, in turn would mean there would be fewer higher-quality people at the cutting edge of research – so "we would lose out in terms of exports and general prosperity".

The Baroness was previously master of the University of Birkbeck College, London.

## TELL ME ABOUT ... gravitational slingshots

Sometimes in space travel – as in most endeavours – subtlety is more effective than brute force. It would not be feasible, or cost-effective, to send a tiny craft such as Galileo to Jupiter by strapping huge fuel tanks onto it. The fuel would run out long before the target was reached.

But by using the natural attributes of the huge masses dotted around the Solar System, you can do the job quite easily – by using the planets as slingshots to speed your craft on its way.

Imagine a stationary planet alone in space. A fast-moving spacecraft approaching it is attracted by its gravity and speeds up (with respect to the planet), flies past (because its momentum keeps it from being captured), slows down again as it is pulled back by the planet's gravity, and then continues on its way. Net change in forward speed, measured as distance covered over time: zero.

But the spacecraft has changed course because of the slingshot effect caused by the planet's gravity. It is now flying in a different direction from that it was on before – but without using a drop of fuel. It's a bit like grabbing hold of a handrail as you run down a flight of stairs to turn yourself quickly to reach the next flight of stairs heading down.

This process was essential for the Ulysses spacecraft, which used a slingshot around the planet Jupiter to change its flight path out of the plane of the ecliptic (the plane in which the Earth and planets orbit around the Sun) into a polar orbit around the Sun. No spacecraft could carry enough propellants to do this with a rocket engine firing alone.

So change of direction can be important, but a more effective use of gravitational slingshots was made by Voyager and Galileo (among others) to pick up speed and reach their destinations sooner.

The key point here is that by using slingshots around planets they picked up speed with respect to the Sun – that is, moved faster in their orbits around the Sun. Why? Because the example above, with the "stationary" planet, is misleading. The planets are moving – they are orbiting the Sun. So while there may be no speed gain with respect to the planet, there is when viewed from the Sun. If you fly past the planet ahead of it in its orbit you lose speed. If you fly past the planet behind it in its orbit, then you gain speed.

Of course, nothing in the universe is free. When the spacecraft gains speed, the planet loses an infinitesimal amount of angular momentum (orbital speed), and so orbits just a tiny bit closer to the Sun as a result. It has given angular momentum to the spacecraft – which speeds up, climbs a bit further out of the Sun's "gravity well" and so reaches its destination sooner.



Hopping by: The Galileo probe Reuters



# God's gift to mothers ... that's the Prof

هكذا من الأصل



DEBORAH ROSS  
TALKS TO  
PROFESSOR  
IAN CRAFT

7am. A chic little house just off Harley Street, home of Professor Ian Craft, the foremost fertility expert whose private clinic, the London Gynaecology & Fertility Centre, successfully and controversially treated 60-year-old Elizabeth Buttle.

I arrive in a mini-cab. Professor Craft, wearing a suede waistcoat and half-moon glasses, with something quite camp going on around his hips and wrists, bounds out. "Hello, dear. Come in, come in."

Then, to the driver, who is black: "You must like reggae, hm?"

"I like opera, actually," says the driver. "Oh? Yes, well. Good man. Jolly good. So do I. Now, dear, come in..."

Up the stairs, past the busts of his parents, Reginald and Mary, on the landing - "lovely, lovely people, although I'm not a mummy's or daddy's boy" - then into the kitchen. "Now, I'm not sure what you want from me, dear, but whatever you write it's bound to make all of my colleagues jealous because I have always been so much further ahead of them. I am an innovator, dear, a pioneer if you like. Mine were the first test tube twins. I was the first to successfully do Gift [Gamma Intrafallopian Transfer, where the egg is fertilised in the fallopian tube] in this country. Lord Winston said Gift was one of the biggest contrivances purveyed on women. But now? He does it all the time, dear. Same with sister to sister egg donation. I got a lot of criticism when I first did that 10 years ago, but now it's routine practice."

"Professor Craft," I interrupt, "I wonder if..."

"I'm afraid I can't tell you whether or not I treated Elizabeth Buttle personally. It would be a breach of confidence. I was actually in America at a conference when the story broke. I spent £880 on phone calls. The Daily Mail wrote a very vicious piece about me. Appalling. They even said I was slightly balding. Tell me dear, where am I going bald, hm?"

"Anyway, Mrs Buttle lied to us about her age and circumstances, so what could we do? We are not obliged to authenticate these things. We are not a court of law. How far does society want us to be guardian of morals, hm? When a woman has an operation for blocked fallopian tubes on the NHS, she is asked whether she is fit to bring up a child? No, I'm not saying anything goes. We could get a 75-year-old woman pregnant but it would be silly to do so..."

"Professor Craft, I'm just wondering..."

"I know I'm garrulous, dear, but I have so much to say, hm? I've even gone so far as to prepare a few notes for you. I've written you out a list of my qualities." He hands me the list. It covers two sides of paper. "Sensitive" is first. "Sensitive. That's me. Now what's next. Compassionate. I am very compassionate. Driven. Yes, but not by money. Money is not my God. Creative. Absolutely. I am a very creative man. And creating babies is such a happy thing. Oh yes, it's very sad when people re-mortgage their houses for treatment and get no result, but what can you do?"

"Professor Craft, I'm wondering IF I MIGHT USE YOUR TOILET."

"Yes, dear. Go ahead." I do go ahead. It's lovely and peaceful in his too. I am minded to never come out but I do, which is a mistake. Professor Craft is waiting for me on the landing in an old tweed cap, with tears in his eyes. "My father's old cap. He died last year, on the 20th July. Lovely man."



I am sentimental, yes. See, it's on my list. Sentimental. Would you like to see my father's old glasses. I keep them by my bed. There's even a bit of shaving foam on one of the arms."

I'm beginning to think Professor Craft is the last person I'd want poking about in my insides, old tweed cap or no old tweed cap. But people come to him because they want babies. May even be desperate to have babies. He doesn't have to be likeable or nice or modest or in it for anything other than self-glorification. He is very successful at what he does. The top man, if you can afford it. Conventional IVF costs about £4,000 a go. More sophisticated techniques, like Gift, are costlier. "Am I rich? I am comfortable, dear."

9am. We go over the road to the clinic. On our way, I ask him what I've always wanted to ask a gynaecologist. Doesn't looking at women's bits and bobs all day put you off, you know, sex with your wife or whatever? "Oh no. The women you see professionally... well, it's just plumbing, isn't it? Although of course I treat the whole woman. Yes, yes. I treat all my patients as individuals. Treating patients as individuals is Ian Craft all over. He then says I must see his new laser machine from Switzerland. It'll be used to assist the hatching of embryos. "It's the first in the country!" He then confides that he and Jackie, his wife of 40 years, have just separated. "A sad life, a doctor's life. One is always so busy."

The clinic is all nice and marble inside, with lots of classical statues of women holding babies. The waiting room is already full of white-faced couples holding hands. Professor Craft has 40 doctors and nurses working for him here. "We are very much a team, although I, of course, am the inspiration, the leader, hm?"

His first patient consultation is with a couple who received ICSI here last August.

ICSI, a relatively new form of treatment, represents an advance on conventional IVF in that it involves directly injecting a sperm into the egg. The treatment resulted in a twin pregnancy, but both babies were lost at 24 weeks, just a week before they would have been viable. (The couple later tell me the babies were born alive, but died in their arms after about an hour.) The husband is English while the wife is Japanese. "Ah, ah, my nice Japanese lady," he cries as they come in. "I must do my little thing." He gets up and bows. Sensitive, like he said.

"Now, very sad news, hm? But we'll get you pregnant dear, don't you worry." His secretary interrupts over the intercom: "Prof? Dr Jackson just called, he's got two tickets for Cymbeline tonight which he can't use. Do you want them?"

"What time and where?"

"I don't know. Prof? Well call him back and ASK! ASK!"

He thinks he'll go, yes. "I do love the opera."

he says. I thought Cymbeline was Shakespeare. I say. "And Shakespeare. I love Shakespeare, too. I love anything live. I don't like things on celluloid. I don't like films. I like reality. I like making people's dreams a reality." He turns to the couple: "I want to make your dream a reality!"

The husband says would love to have had a sister. "He was bright at school, but useless at exams. He only got 2 O-levels the first time round. But then he met his wife, Jackie. "I was 16 and she was 13. We met in Epping Forest. I was there bird-watching while she was out walking with her friend, Veronica."

Jackie gave him belief in himself, he says. He got good O-levels the second time, then enough A-levels to get him into medical school. He wanted to be a doctor, he says, "because I wanted to bring happiness to people." His first job was on a radiotherapy ward at Westminster hospital. Not pleasant. Basically, a lot of old people dy-

ing. He transferred to obstetrics. Much better. A baby at the end of it. Prof, even, that he was worth something. Yes, his father - "such a lovely, gorgeous, humble, honest man" - had been "saddened" by his poor exam performance at school. Now, he was bringing babies forth. What could be more important?

He took further degrees in gynaecology and obstetrics, was a professor at the Royal Free Hospital, then director of gynaecology at the Cromwell Hospital, then a director at the Humana Wellington Hospital before setting up for himself in 1990. He got sick of the NHS ("inadequate funds for research"). His clinic attracts a lot of older women because whereas the NHS rules out treatment to women over 37, he will treat women up to 55. "So long as she can give a child 20 good, loving years then so what, hm?" He has two sons himself.

Simon, who's a Spanish master at Westminster School, and Adrian, who has a degree in history of art and lives with Jackie. "Do us a favour and find him a job, hm?"

10am. Next consultation, this time it's with a Greek couple who've been trying for a baby for four years. Tests have revealed that the husband's sperm quality is very poor. "Let's see, only 10 per cent of your sperm were alive after 24 hours, all dead by 48 hours. That is very sad sperm. You know smoking has an effect on sperm, don't you? And, as a Greek man, I'm sure you smoke. Hang on... hello, Jenny... I've got these two tickets... you're going out with Sheila and Julie... OK."

Professor Craft recommends the couple have a go at ICSI. The woman is not so sure. It's newer and more invasive than conventional IVF. What are the long-term effects? "Well, you can try IVF, dear, but I can tell you now it won't lead to fertilisations. I have no worries about ICSI. I would do it on my own family. Which re-

minds me, I operated on my sister-in-law on Wednesday night. Did her hysterectomy. Must call her. Hello Irene? It's Ian. How are you. You've had a bath? Just 36 hours after the op and you've had a bath. You must have a very good surgeon, hm?"

He then phones Simon, to see if he is free for the theatre tonight. Simon's not in. The couple agree to start the drugs which will prepare them for ICSI. Professor Craft has to work out what sort of dose she needs. "If you don't mind me saying so, dear, but you are quite big and fat..."

He pops out the room to do something for Radio Leeds. I talk to the couple. Yes, they would have liked to have had treatment on the NHS, "but there's a three-year waiting list". Yes, they would prefer to have all of Professor Craft's attention. "He costs £100 per half-hour." But that said, "50 per cent of his attention might be worth 100 per cent of someone else's". He does have excellent success rates: 29 per cent of all IVF treatments result in a birth, as do 31 per cent of all ICSI treatments. So, not compassionate or sensitive or altruistic but good at his job, yes.

Professor Craft returns. I ask him if he always tends to do so many things at once. "Yes, I have a lot of energy. I'm like a clown, juggling balls. I do love the circus. It makes children happy. I think I might be late for my own funeral. Turner was. The horses got stuck in the mud at the bottom of Ludgate Hill. I don't know why I know that but I do."

"Another doctor said to me recently: 'Ian, just looking at you makes me exhausted.' Yes, I am quiet sometimes, especially in the evening when I'm reading about Regency furniture."

11am. Consultation with Singaporean woman and her English husband. They've spent £12,000 on fertility treatment over the past 10 years to no effect. He has good sperm. She has polycystic ovaries. He thinks it's about time she started thinking about an egg donor. "But where are we going to find a nice Singaporean donor, hm?"

Hello, June, I've got these tickets..."

Noon. "Have you seen Cymbeline. Debbie?" Time to go, methinks. Time to go.

**'The women you see professionally ... well, it's just plumbing, isn't it? Although of course I treat the whole woman. Treating patients as individuals is Ian Craft all over'**

## You can learn loads from league tables - except whether a school's any good



DINAH HALL

It's a brave person who ignores government approved league tables these days. Either that, or it's someone who understands both statistics and children.

Bloody league tables. You may rightly assume from this that my children's school did not do too well in them. From being about midway down the borough's table last year we had slipped dangerously close to the bottom, fraternising with the schools that are used around here as bogey men to frighten

nic middle-class children ("If you don't eat up your crusts you'll go to that school down the road where all the girls are called Kylie and all the boys wear earrings").

Parents who had their children's names down for the school next year are getting cold feet - after all, it's a brave person who ignores government-approved league tables these days. Either that, or it's someone who understands both statistics and children, because the truth, as will be revealed after several years of see-sawing results, is that in one-form entry school, in particular, results will differ, sometimes quite dramatically, from

year to year. The education on offer is just the same, the teacher - in our case - was just the same but the children were different.

In a small class you need only one high-achieving child to be away, and a couple of others to miss level 4 by a whisker, for results to be well and truly skewed. Add to that a higher than average number of children with special needs and you have a recipe for one thoroughly demoralised head teacher. Yes, but who wants to be in a class with lots of low-achieving children, you may wonder? Ask the parents of the child in that class who already had two GCSEs under his belt,

and the one who got the scholarship to private school, and the others who got into highly selective schools without private coaching. (Ironically, had there been a separate league table for children achieving levels 5 & 6, ie beyond what is expected of them, our school would have been close to the top of the table). Ask, for that matter, the parents of the special-needs child for whom a level 2 or 3 is something to celebrate.

You can tell a lot from league tables - you can tell what the catchment area is like, you can tell when a school has cheated, when it has taught to the tests or targeted borderline level 4 children, ne-

glecting no-hopers as well as those who could achieve level 5 or 6. But you can't necessarily tell whether a school is any good.

Sadly, however, even some of the teaching profession is now adopting the heresy. At a conference on the new literacy requirements, a delegation from a group of higher-achieving schools (ie the ones from affluent catchment areas, where half the children have private tutors from the age of seven) asked why they should have to adopt the new literacy strategies when they were already doing a "good" job - implying, thereby, that their colleagues, who work with a

broader range of children, are doing a "bad" job.

Poor dears, though. They were all terribly excited about the venue for this conference, the newly finished NEC Harlequins. New carpets! Comfortable chairs! Lights! Being treated as civilised human beings was obviously a new experience - when we were sent off in groups to private rooms with tears of gratitude. Coca Cola! Fanta! Sprite! "Ooh, they've been chilled..." I can see why the government won't give them a decent pay rise - the excitement would kill them.

But it's not all been doom and gloom this week. On Mon-

day my friend Laura told me that her son Tom had pointed out a picture of me in the newspaper - and it turned out to be Julie Christie. I was so thrilled that I quite forgot to ask whether it was pre- or post-facelift. My heightened self-esteem didn't last long, however. "Look, it's you Mumi!" shouted my five-year-old, that same day, stabbing her finger at my newspaper.

Goodness, it could get quite tiresome being constantly mistaken for a fabulously beautiful actress, I sighed, as I glanced over at the picture of... Elizabeth Buttle, the 60-year-old mother. Am thinking of asking Laura if she'll swap children.



## Spare this woman of God, and spare everybody



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Why do Americans have their doubts about executing Karla Faye Tucker by lethal injection at midnight tomorrow? Is it because she had been provoked beyond endurance by the man she killed, who used to park his Harley Davidson in her front room? No. Not even the fact that the motorbike leaked oil, making a terrible mess of the carpet, was grounds for pleading justifiable homicide. Even in America, where McDonald's can be sued for making its coffee hot and therefore dangerous when held between the knees while driving.

Is it, then, that she was such a sad low-life that she never really stood a chance in life? No. She may have been a prostitute by the age of 11, addicted to heroin, and out of her tree on the night of the murder, but this is America, where it is compulsory to believe that everyone has a chance of making it to the top and no excuses are accepted.

Besides, if the damage done by abused and broken childhoods could be entered

in clemency, very few of those presently awaiting execution on death row would be there. And the fact that Tucker had taken an astonishingly unlikely combination of drugs on the night she murdered the biker and his girlfriend with a pick axe as they lay in their beds serves only to worsen, not lessen, her crime in the eyes of most Americans.

No, the reason that America hesitates is because Tucker is female. Since the death penalty was reintroduced in 1976 (after a four-year remission, the all-too-brief zenith of American liberalism), 432 human beings have been killed in cold blood by agents of the American people acting in the name of justice. Of these, only one was a woman. As Natasha Walter argues in her book urging the mobilisation of a "New Feminism", statistics prove that women still experience discrimination.

Governor George W Bush Jr, the son of the last president who would like to be the next, must be hoping that the Texas

parole board does not give him the option today of commuting Tucker's sentence to life. He finds himself caught in the cross-currents running through the American electorate between two popular conservative instincts. In Karla Tucker's case, the irresistible force of its fierce support for the death penalty meets the immovable object of the deep structure of American attitudes to women.

Of course, this is not a simple case of sexism, and American feminists, new or old, have not been taking to the streets to demand a pardon for Tucker on the grounds that she was oppressed by a male-dominated society. Although there would be a respectable argument for that, and the symbolic masculinity of that Harley Davidson in her sitting room almost invites academic feminist commentary.

The conservative support for Tucker is not just because she is a woman, although that is a large part of it. The one woman who has been executed in the US since

1976 was Velma Barfield, in North Carolina in 1984, who poisoned four people including her mother. But she was "a tough-looking old broad and nobody paid much attention", according to *Newsweek's* correspondent. Tucker, a telegenic 38-year-old, has benefited from the sentimental code of chivalry. In the days of "old" feminism, this might have been condemned as part of the ideology of patriarchy: today the point has been made. Being polite to women is one thing; treating them differently has to be justified in each case.

And there is no reason for treating Tucker differently from male murderers, many of whom have suffered worse discrimination on grounds of the colour of their skin than she may have done on grounds of her sex.

But the other reason why conservatives have taken up Karla Tucker's case is because she has converted to fundamentalist Christianity. The religious right's one-time presidential hopeful, Pat Robert-

son, pleaded with Governor Bush on 60 Minutes, saying that if he "lets this sweet woman of God die, he's a man who shows no mercy".

To which all opponents of the death penalty should respond "Amen" - if not "Hallelujah". If religious right-wingers in America can see the argument for mercy in the case of what seems like genuine remorse and rehabilitation, then perhaps there is hope. Tucker has been a model prisoner, helping fellow inmates with drugs problems, and Mr Robertson says that because she has been born again, God must have forgiven her.

It is too optimistic to hope that this principle might soon be applied more widely. But the fact that opinion polls in Texas are evenly divided over Karla Tucker's fate could be the start of something. Let us hope that more and more Americans will come to realise that, if it is wrong to execute her because she is a God-fearing woman, then it is wrong to execute anybody.

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Letters may be edited for length and clarity.

## LETTERS

### Clinton's war game

Though inevitable tragedy almost certainly lies ahead for the people of Iraq, this latest crisis appears to have all the thought, structure and logic of the input of the proverbial headless chicken.

There is the Armed Forces Minister, John Reid, on HMS Edinburgh, playing war games in the Channel reported as saying "There's something romantic about this; better then working on the Child Support Agency" (report, 29 January). "Romantic". Mr Reid? This is preparation for killing people.

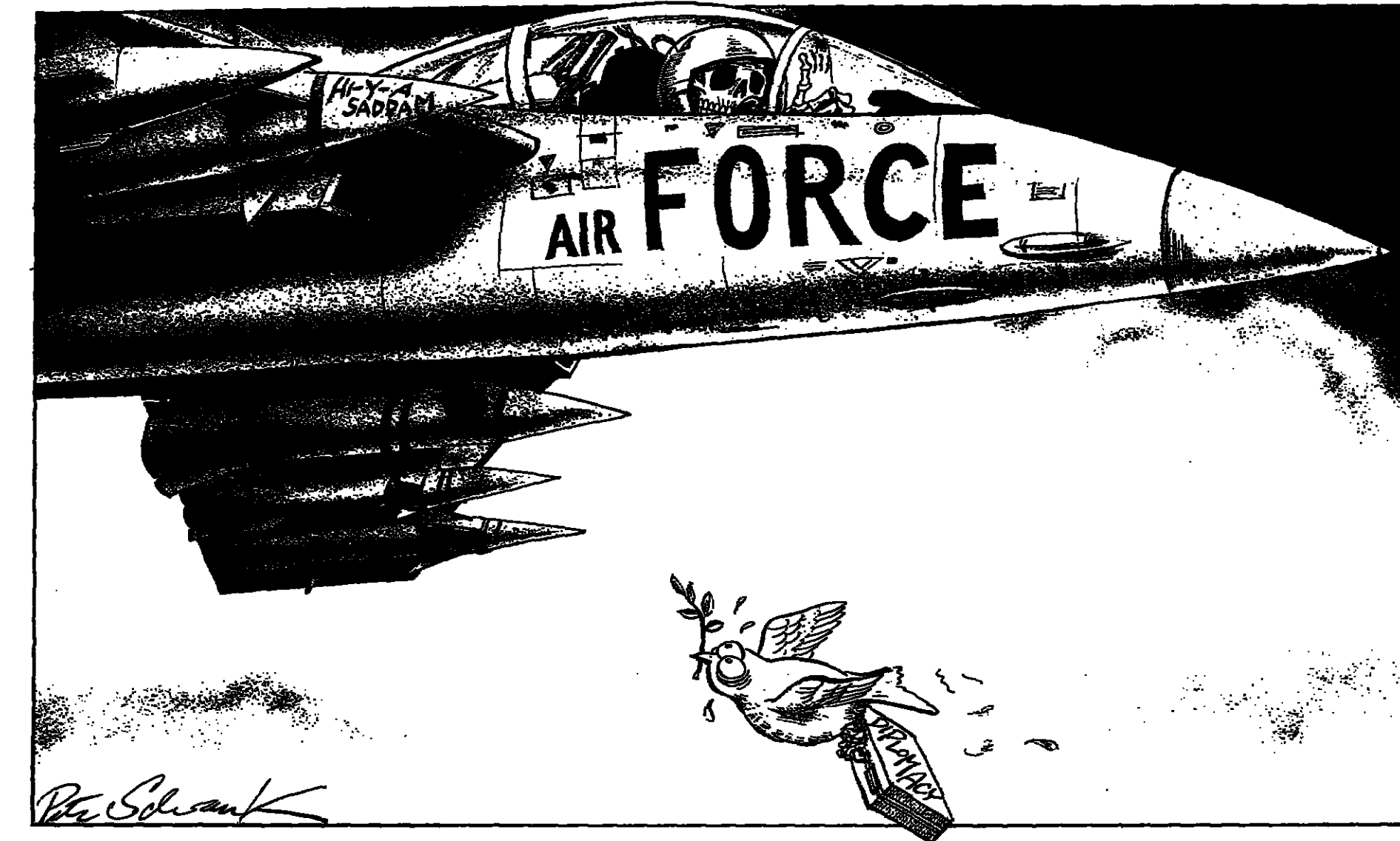
The Pentagon spokesman Kenneth Bacon says an option is to bomb stockpiles of chemical and biological weapons, which, if they exist, will release the most deadly toxins known, throughout the Middle East.

The response to the expelling of a maximum of 41 weapons inspectors is out of all proportion. There are still approximately 400 weapons personnel in Iraq, and it is business as usual.

On the face of it this would appear a reckless, feckless and unnecessary exercise which will do nothing for the standing of Britain and the United States in the Middle East and flies in the face of the majority vote of the UN Security Council.

In 1739 Britain declared war on Spain, a war Walpole had sought to avoid, tipped in the balance by the severing of the ear of the Master of the merchant ship *Rebecca*. "The War of Jenkins's Ear" resulted, also merged with American interests and lasted for 11 years. It is to be hoped that history, in spite of the spin put on it, will not record this latest crisis as "The War of Clinton's Member". If it does, we will be debased throughout time.  
FELICITY ARBUTHNOT  
London E9

Saddam Hussein is continuing to develop his stocks of unconventional weapons and will use every deception to facilitate that aim. He will have no moral qualms about using such weapons against Israel, Saudi Arabia or countries further afield. Relaxing sanctions is desirable from a humanitarian point of view but is irrelevant as a means of halting Iraq's weapons programme. The US and Britain are the only countries with the moral fibre and military means to take



preventive action. Either we do the job or Israel will get its retaliation in first, with destabilising consequences.  
JONATHAN SMITH,  
Northwood, Middlesex

If Iraq is to be attacked, at least let it be done logically. The UN's declared aim is to destroy actual and potential weapons of mass destruction. If UN inspectors are barred from inspecting certain installations, then those places might as well be blown up. To attack other places in Iraq would not be so logical.  
Air Marshal Sir REGINALD E W HARLAND  
Bury St Edmunds, Suffolk

### Grief hijacked

As a young boy growing up in Ireland one of my earliest recollections was Bloody Sunday. I recall groups of adults in our street standing, shocked, scared, and in whispering huddled groups. I remember my father

telling me that something awful had happened and, although very young, understanding from his face that indeed something undoubtedly had. The IRA has hijacked this event and nailed it to its propaganda mast. However the sense of shock, anger, and bitterness was then and is now still felt by many who would otherwise hold no support for the provisionals. The inescapable issue of Bloody Sunday is that the legitimate and lawful army of a legitimate and lawful state killed, perhaps murdered, with impunity.

It is not for the perpetrator's to judge the worthiness or appropriateness of an apology, rather the victims.  
E O'MEARA  
Buckhurst Hill, Essex

When you write (leader, 30 January) that many people on the mainland of Britain are likely to react to the new inquiry into Bloody Sunday by thinking there is little point in the taxpayer paying for a rather ex-

pensive piece of historical research, are you implying that this reaction is unlikely to be shared by those living on the Isle of Wight, on Skye, Islay, Harris and Lewis, Barra, Orkney, and Shetland?  
ROBERT NOWELL  
New Barnet, Hertfordshire

### The full Mosley

Comments made in the article (28 January) on a new television series about Sir Oswald Mosley offer a perspective on what happens to history. Henry Morris wants a hatchet job done on Mosley, as if Mosley himself didn't do a sufficiently successful job of destroying what was potentially one of the century's stellar political careers.

Frederic Mullally's comments are equally unfortunate. As he should be all too aware, Sir Oswald was an idealist (he served in the Labour Party), he was glamorous and he was highly attractive.

But we are not really discussing Sir Oswald the man here, so much as whether or not scriptwriters presenting a figure from British history have the right to present him as he was. Should this sort of biographical study be censored, then Sir Oswald will not be the only one guilty of fascist behaviour.  
PETER BARLOW  
Abu Dhabi

### Making mines safer

May I reply to the view A J P Dalton gives (Letters 28 January) of health and safety conditions in Britain's coal mines?

The past 50 years have seen a significant improvement and this is continuing. Since the inception of the Health and Safety Commission and Executive (HSC/E) the enforcement of regulations dealing with control of respirable dust, noise and hazardous substances has greatly improved miners' health protection. I agree that miners have suffered the scourge of

lung diseases since coal was first mined. Nevertheless, it was not until research was instituted by the Medical Research Council in 1936 that coal dust was recognised as a primary agent. The first controls were introduced by the National Coal Board in 1949.

The E1bn compensation referred to by Mr Dalton relates to respiratory diseases other than pneumoconiosis, such as chronic bronchitis and emphysema. Although the causal effect of coal dust in these diseases is not yet precisely understood, a forthcoming HSC review will closely examine the evidence.

HSE is conducting a full investigation into the allegations of accident under-reporting which emerged during 1997 and I would assure you that HSE will prosecute mine operators wherever appropriate.  
BRIAN LANGDON  
HM Chief Inspector of Mines  
Health and Safety Executive  
Boothle, Merseyside

### Care on paper

As an ex-nurse of 18 years' experience, I know that Peter Fisher from the NHS Consultants' Association (letter, 29 January) is quite right about the culture clash in today's NHS.

For nurses, another problem is the stress caused by the mismatch between increasing responsibility and decreasing control. A common reaction is for nurses to retreat into the office, immersing themselves in paperwork while leaving patient care to untrained care assistants. This is actually the road to promotion, since the modern NHS manager is more impressed by documents than by real-life activity.

When I trained in the 1970s, nurse training was an apprenticeship. The modern training, being far more academic, invites unfavourable comparison with a degree, which would lead to a much higher starting salary.  
PETER J LUCE  
Plymouth, Devon

### Act for the capital

The Greenwich Theatre wishes Trevor Phillips luck with what looks like his bid to be Mayor of London. His article (24 January) telling arts practitioners not to bother central government for even a modest improvement in their low levels of funding will have earned him valuable brownie points at Westminster. But we have a few tips that may improve his chances with the voters.

He should try to be mayor for all London, not just fashionable enclaves north of the river. His endorsement of the London Arts Board's decision to cut out theatre and deprive south-east London of its only repertory theatre doesn't suggest much interest in areas beyond Rotherhithe. And the 51,000 people who visited our theatre last year will feel excluded by his statement that the audience for theatre "has disappeared from south-east London".

As mayor, Trevor will need to argue the case for investment in London's infrastructure. Greenwich Theatre receives less than a quarter of the subsidy quite rightly given to the Royal Court and less than half the money that goes to the excellent Stratford East (though last year we took more at the box office than either of these).

The capital is full of small groups and struggling communities who will expect his support and encouragement. They will be concerned that Trevor has slammed the door so aggressively on the most poorly funded of London's middle-scale companies, mocking the genuine concern of others as "a sort of Wagnerian fury".  
MATTHEW FRANCIS  
Artistic Director  
Greenwich Theatre, London

### Shopping and eating

I was bemused by Jeremy Laurence's article (Fighting the flab: it ain't what you eat, or is it?, 30 January). A much cheaper way of conducting their research would be for scientists to stand at supermarket check-outs and observe the contents of fat peoples' shopping trolleys - an abundance of crisps, snacks, chocolate, bars, fizzy drinks etc. If that is not convincing enough, I suggest they study these people munching their way through the contents of their trolleys on the way to the car park.  
S C COELHO  
Teddington, Middlesex

## There is an eerie void behind the politicians behind the Dome



MILES KINGSTON

I don't suppose many now people remember the name of Bernard Hollowood, who was editor of *Punch* after Malcolm Muggeridge. Well, I don't suppose many people were aware of him then, and I wouldn't have been aware of him either if he had not been editor of *Punch* at the time I joined the staff, and as he was my boss, it seemed only tactful to be aware of him.

This was somewhere about the time that Alec Douglas-Home was leaving office and Harold Wilson was entering No 10. I remember that particularly, because Bernard Hollowood was a convinced socialist and was cockahoop that at last a left-wing government was coming in. It seems

hard to imagine now, but Harold Wilson was seen then as bringing the same kind of fresh air into Downing Street as Tony Blair is now. I am not sure if he was seen as young and fresh-faced - after all, he had been kicking around Westminster since the 1940s - but he was certainly seen as a new broom and all that kind of thing. Goodbye, fuddy duddy old establishment Tories! Hello, white-hot technological revolution! Goodbye inertia, hello progress!

It didn't quite work out like that, and now we remember Wilson's government as just as fallible and floundering as all the others, and twice as dreary. But Bernard Hollowood would have known why. He

would have said - because I remember him saying it - that when a left-wing government got into power it always made the same mistake: it tried to make friends.

"They always try and play themselves in, try to kid everyone that they are a nice cuddly bunch who wouldn't do anyone any harm. This isn't the way to do it at all. What a socialist government has got to do is do as much damage as possible in the first few months while they can get away with it! Nationalise everything while they can, take things away from the capitalists while they can! It'll make them unpopular, but all governments become unpopular after a while, so it's no use trying to avoid it. Ignore it and do your

damndest while you've got your chance ..."

Well, how would Hollowood have judged Tony Blair's government after the first nine months?

He would have been puzzled, I feel. New Labour has shown no appetite for nationalisation, no urge to get the railways back, for instance. The only big sign of change has been Blair's commitment to the idea of reforming the welfare system, which is radical in its own way. But that is not what has marked out Blair's first year in office, and given it its character. What stands out is the way it has gradually lost popularity through a series of petty measures designed to stop people doing things. The outstanding

example is "Dr" Jack Cunningham's decision to ban the sale of beef on the bone, simply because he was advised that there was a one-in-a-billion chance of catching CJD from it. But it has been followed by a series of proposals to ban the use of raw milk in cheese-making, to help ban fox-hunting, to refuse to consider unbanning cannabis, to ban almost every kind of gun imaginable, to increase the severity of the drink 'n' drive limit ...

This isn't a series of political safety measures. This is a wave of puritanism sweeping over the Government and thus over the country. It doesn't attack any big problems - drugs problems, CAP problems, bureaucracy problems, arts fund-

ing problems, Northern Ireland - but it makes it look as if the Government is doing something.

(If you examine any of the measures closely, each one seems ill-judged. Personally, if I were told that the chances of catching CJD through beef on the bone were one in a billion, I would enact a law forcing people to eat beef on the bone, on the grounds that it actually reduced the chances of infection to one in a billion ...)

I am not sure, though, that the Government is doing anything. Take away all the high-minded ordinances which try to stop us from doing things, and I wonder if anyone can name something positive the Government has done, something con-

structive and forward-looking. Anyone ...? Yes, at the back? The Dome.

The Government has been positive about the Dome. The Government has poured millions and millions of pounds into the Dome.

Thank you.

Anything else? No, I thought not. It has merely issued a series of bans and prohibitions. It has required a Puritan, prohibitive flavour. Tony Blair may have marched into Downing Street looking like a young Cavalier, but he has been acting in an increasingly Cromwellian fashion ever since.

This article was written entirely without the use of the phrase "nanny state".



## Mummy's hair dryer isn't a good way of warming the bath



THOMAS  
SUTCLIFFE  
ON SAYING 'NO'  
TO CHILDREN

Is raising children an affirmative experience? The answer to this is obviously true in a larger sense, of course. I say "of course" here, as writers usually do in newspapers, as a kind of defensive aggression ("Of course" sometimes means "everyone but a lunatic would agree. Therefore if you disagree you must be a lunatic"). But just as often it means something like "I know the objection that is rising in your mind and I want you to know that I have already considered it. I am not blinkered, you know." So - of course - raising children is a positive experience, the full five points in a happiness questionnaire, a big tick in the box marked Contentment.

The last thing I would want you to think is that I was anti-child in any way, which would be virtually the same thing as saying I was anti-life. And this isn't just a sacred cow that has gone to sleep in the road. Whatever my wife thinks on an average Saturday morning, I'm really not anti-child at all. I can see that the point of them goes far beyond the replacement of society's worn-out parts. But there remains a paradox. If bringing up children is a way of saying yes to life then why is it that one spends virtually every waking hour saying no to them?

I was struck by this question after a day of unusually concentrated prohibition, the standard trilogy of the adult-child relationship - No You Can't, Don't and Stop That Right Now - having been deployed in every conceivable circumstance and every tonal range - from the exhausted to the enraged. And such days are unusually draining on parental energy - because the general denial seeps into the very fabric of life. It's like driving with the handbrake on - a sense that forward motion is achieved only at the expense of some grinding friction deep within the machine - a puzzled awareness that things should be rolling more smoothly than they actually are. I started to check on my own negatives ... This is just a short selection of recent denials and interdicts uttered in my own house:

Don't stick your head in the washing machine.  
Stop blowing your nose on my trousers.  
Don't shout.  
No we can't go to Africa for lunch.  
Don't bite the toothbrush while I'm trying to clean your teeth.

Stop rubbing lemonade on your hair.  
Don't wipe your hands on your mother.  
No we can't have a baby killer whale as a pet.  
Don't shout.  
No you can't go to school dressed as a Wookiee.  
Don't try to drink your juice with a fork.  
Stop sitting on my head.  
No you can't put your pajamas on inside out.  
Please don't shout.  
No, we can't have a police car when this one gets broken.  
Don't poke your finger in your brother's ear while he's having his hair brushed.  
No, you can't poke a finger in his ear now.  
Don't post the house keys through the letterbox.

NO!! Mummy's hair dryer isn't a good way of warming the bath up.  
Don't climb up my arms while I'm trying to button your coat.  
No you can't watch *Newsnight* tonight.  
For God's sake stop shouting!  
No you can't sleep in the bath tonight.  
Stop sitting on the dishwasher door.  
No you can't wipe your brother's bottom.  
Don't look at the pictures, look at the words.

STOP BLOODY SHOUTING!!!!  
I suppose the first thing that should be said about such an audit is that a certain amount of prohibition is inseparable from parental responsibility. It's hard to imagine that even the most liberal programme of empirical learning would allow a child to drop an electrical appliance into a bath to see what happened next.

It's also true that it would be inhuman to deny a parent's right to a certain amount of consoling obstinacy - after a long day in the trenches of parenthood, after a day in which perfectly reasonable requests have been repeatedly ignored, the odd arbitrary ban can be absurdly satisfying. But what's also clear is that the habit of saying no inexorably spreads beyond its useful bounds. It's like attempting to write a legible note on blotting paper - the line thickens and melds until it is almost impossible to make out just what the message was in the first place.

"You don't rule my life!" my six year old shouted the other day after a bedtime showdown over whether he would be allowed to go to sleep inside his duvet cover rather than under it. "Don't be silly," I thought. "Of course I do."

But walking downstairs, the battle won. I did wonder why I had hit the brake pads so hard for such a gentle bend in the road. Why couldn't he sleep inside his duvet cover? No rational reason of safety or decorum or hygiene presented itself. A concession to this desire now was hardly likely to lead to delinquency and probation in ten years time. Even Jack Straw might think that the interweaving of person and bed linen was a matter that could be left to the individual conscience, however unformed it was. I had simply got into a habit of denial - a twitch of resistance which implicitly assumes that raising children is largely a negative experience.

## Even 'smart' weapons will not make Saddam do as he's told



PATRICK  
COCKBURN  
THE LIMITS OF  
AIR POWER

It is a bizarre plan. Within a few weeks American and British bombs and missiles may be striking targets across Iraq. But the aim of Gulf War II is not to overthrow Saddam Hussein, but to secure his cooperation. It will succeed if he agrees to give UN inspectors unfettered access to all sites in Iraq in search of biological, chemical or nuclear weapons materials and the means to deliver them. In other words it is the Iraqi leader who will decide if the coming operation is successful.

The rhetoric about "punishing Saddam" and the ability of US air power to strike at will in Iraq, masks the fact that the Iraqi leader is in a strong political position despite his extreme military vulnerability. His most likely response to air attack is to evict Uncom - the UN weapons inspectors. They can not operate without his permission and assistance. Once the bombing is over the UN Security Council will have to discuss with Iraq their return to Baghdad. The US will end up negotiating with Saddam, which is exactly what President Clinton said he would not do.

The objective of Gulf War II is therefore very different from Gulf War I in 1991. Then the aim was to throw the Iraqi army out of Kuwait, something which could be done by destroying its ability to fight. This time the purpose is to force Saddam Hussein to change his policy. "We do not have as a goal the toppling of Saddam Hussein," said William Cohen, the US Defence Secretary, at the weekend, warning against "unreasonable expectations" that the strikes would in themselves eliminate Iraqi biological or chemical weapons. In other words the battlefield is in the mind of the Iraqi leader.

The present crisis is the



Hitting stationary objects is the easy bit: Baghdad telephone exchange destroyed during the Gulf War. Signs

culmination of a series of little-noticed failures in American policy towards Iraq. Between 1991 and 1996 the CIA did, indeed, back a series of attempts to topple the Iraqi leader by dissidents in the Iraqi army. The agency operated freely in Iraq, but the Iraqi forces had withdrawn. But the effort was half-hearted. Washington was content, in the words of Tony Lake, the former National Security Adviser, "to keep Saddam in his box". Attempted coups in Baghdad were bloody crushed. In 1996 Saddam sent his tanks back into Kurdistan, and the CIA had to flee in their worst debacle since the Bay of Pigs.

The reason why the present crisis over UN inspectors began last October is that Saddam Hussein feels more secure at home than he has in years. Ever since Gen Hussein Kamel, Saddam's chief lieutenant and son-in-law, fled to Jordan in 1995 (and unwisely returned to Baghdad to be promptly murdered) there have been no serious signs of divisions within the inner core of the Iraqi leadership. This is important because a Saddam Hussein who felt his grip on power is weakening would be more likely to cave in under the threat of a bombing campaign.

The warning from William Cohen that Americans should not have exaggerated expectations about the bombing

campaign, shows nervousness in Washington about where all this is heading. The problem is that in 1991 the Gulf air war was oversold. It appeared that war could be effectively waged by the US and its allies without casualties to their own side (the heaviest losses suffered proportionate to size were to a Rumanian medical unit in Saudi Arabia which tried to make its own alcohol).

Airforces around the world have ever since tried to persuade their governments that a revolutionary type of war had been discovered in the Gulf conflict. The US airforce, according to the General Accounting Office (GAO) in Washington, has no less than \$58bn worth of guided munitions and the means to deliver them, in use or on order. Exaggerated accounts were given about the accuracy of the Stealth bomber: "One Target, One Bomb" was the slogan of one defence contractor. The GAO study revealed that every Iraqi target destroyed in 1991 had been hit by an average of 44 tons of unguided and 11 tons of guided munitions.

"Smart" weapons have brought incremental, but not revolutionary changes to war. Big static targets are easy to hit. On the first day of the Gulf War, television viewers across the world saw telecommunications towers in Baghdad explode as they were hit. What was not

apparent was that this was as good as it was going to get. Small mobile targets like tanks cannot be hit unless planes fly low, when they become vulnerable to anti-aircraft fire. The US airforce claimed to have destroyed 90 mobile missile launchers in 1991. The real figure, an air force study revealed, was nil. The pilots had hit decoys and petrol tankers on their way to Jordan.

It is not that air power does not work, but, as with the British strategic bombing offensive against Germany in 1942-45, the claims of its proponents are exaggerated. Bombing does not win wars on its own. Its effectiveness depends on presuppositions about the strength of will of the enemy. But, as in 1942, the claims of airforces who say they can do a job, which otherwise would have to be done by ground troops with heavy casualties, remains deeply attractive to governments.

Ironically, this belief that control of a country can be exercised by air power alone was first pioneered in Iraq in the 1920s, by Winston Churchill as Colonial Secretary, just after Britain captured it from the Turks. Ground troops were largely withdrawn. According to the Gulf specialist Paul Rich, JH Thomas, a subsequent Colonial Secretary, commended the performance of the RAF in Iraq, saying: "By prompt demon-

strations [of air power] on the first signs of trouble over any area affected, however distant, tribal insubordination has been calmed before it could grow dangerous." In a withering criticism of this policy, as early as 1921, Sir Laming Worthington-Evans, Secretary of State for War, wrote: "If the Arab population realise that the peaceful control of Mesopotamia ultimately depends on our intention of bombing women and children, I am very doubtful if we shall gain the acquiescence of the fathers and husbands of Mesopotamia as a whole."

Supporters of a new bombing campaign against Iraq will say immediately that it is not aimed at civilians. But the problem is not accuracy but intelligence. In 1991 American aircraft destroyed the Amariyah shelter in Baghdad in the belief that Saddam Hussein was inside. Instead their bombs killed 500 women and children.

James Rubin, the State Department press secretary of Madeleine Albright, says the American aim is "compliance, compliance, compliance" with the UN resolutions of 1991, under which UN inspection teams operate in Iraq. But the resolutions were only accepted by Iraq under the threat of ground attack by the Gulf War alliance. If the second round of the Gulf War is confined to air attack alone, then it is lost even before it has begun.

## Why the end of the population explosion is nigh



NICHOLAS  
SCHOON  
THE ESCAPE  
FROM BIOLOGY

Yesterday, without fanfare, the United Nations announced a great triumph of human self-interest over the selfish gene. It published new, long-range population forecasts stretching out to 2150 which predict population growth will have drastically slowed down within a few decades. By the end of the next century it expects human numbers to be virtually stabilised at a little over 10 billion - less than double today's 5.9 billion.

What is going on? After three decades of global fretting about a population explosion, about a world with too many mouths to feed running short of basic resources, it looks as if the "demographic transition" is spreading rapidly around the globe.

Before the transition happens women have lots of babies but there is a tremendous infant

condition of "most hunter-gatherer and primitive agricultural societies."

Then farming becomes more productive, cities, industry and commerce grow and basic sanitation and healthcare improve. Infant mortality falls and life expectancy lengthens. Fertility, however, remains very high with mothers having five or more children. So population soars, doubling in 25 years or less. That is just what has happened over the past quarter century in dozens of developing countries, so it is hardly surprising that pundits and politicians panicked.

But the transition moves on. As people become better educated and more prosperous, as the servitude of women is weakened, as access to contraception spreads, fertility starts to decline rapidly. Women marry later, wait longer after marriage to have their first child and have fewer over their lifetime. Once the fertility rate drops to about 2.1 children per woman and stays there population growth will end. Any lower and human numbers will begin to fall.

Amazingly, encouragingly, this demographic transition now seems to be well under way across most of the world. In developed countries such as Britain, it occupied about 150 years and ended roughly 70 years ago. In many developing countries, the transition seems to be taking place within 100 years and nearing completion already. In China and Thailand, for example, total fertility rates are already under 2.1.

It is hard to believe that people living in such different cultures, at different times, with different standards of living, should all conform to the same pattern. But, broadly speaking, they are (although in some countries governments have played a leading and sometimes the oppressive role in managing the transition). The exceptions seem to prove the rule. It is only in the poorest nations and those where women are least emancipated that population growth is still frighteningly, dangerously rapid.

The demographic transition is among the most significant developments in human history

land surface, is unknown. With advances in technology the world could maybe support five or even 10 times today's population. Perhaps we will come to regard the most important constraints as aesthetic and psychological ones. We may want a planet with adequate space between people and cities, with remnants of countryside and wilderness.

Whatever the limits are, they exist - and if we are to avoid crashing into them catastrophically, at full tilt, we will have to get off the track of rapid population growth sooner or later. As it happens, we are doing it now.

two or three children (indeed, for some of us, having any at all) is to risk letting those juggling balls crash to the floor.

We have a completely different mindset to our ancestors of just half a dozen generations ago. We no longer see children as bringing security in our old age. We know we can choose their number using fairly reliable and cheap contraception. Why incur the expense of a big family? And why, when the time and even the love we can put into parenting is finite, risk spreading those precious commodities too thinly?

Obvious, maybe, but all of this is quite out of kilter with

is consciousness for and how did it come about?

Selfish gene theory has begun to explain such things but it cannot explain why, throughout our adult life, we no longer try to raise as many children and grandchildren as possible. Our new-found reproductive restraint is the fruit of reason and self-interest.

Of course the population story isn't over; the future will hold surprises. Demographers were startled at the low level fertility rates dropped to in Europe after the First World War in response to the uncertainty caused by the great depression. Then there came another surprise; fertility made a rapid recovery during the even more uncertain times of the Second World War and this continued through the post-war baby boom.

Today, in Italy, Russia and a dozen more former Communist countries, women are having so few children that numbers are falling. But that will probably change, sooner or later. At the other extreme some poor, densely populated nations with high growth rates such as Pakistan and Egypt seem headed for disaster. It is hard to see how they can supply twice as many people with the basics of food and fresh water.

World wide, however, the number of people being added to global population is falling with each passing year. The UN's Population Division believes that the highest global growth rates are behind us and we will never see their like again. This is our gift to the future.

## Population is stabilising not because we are looking out for our genes, but because we are looking out for ourselves

and prehistory, every bit as important as writing and agriculture. Rapid, sustained population growth is the result of humanity separating itself from the rest of life through culture and invention, enabling itself to appropriate natural resources to a far greater extent than any other species.

But it cannot go on for ever. There comes a time when population growth must be slowed and then stopped.

When? The absolute limit on numbers imposed by living on a finite earth, with restricted fresh water, solar energy, and

The demographic transition can also be seen as one of humanity's greatest breakthroughs from the prison of biology, a victory of self-interest over selfish genes. Population is stabilising not because we are looking out for posterity, nor for society as a whole, and certainly not for our genes, but because we are looking out for ourselves.

The world over people, rich and poor, are trying to juggle different aspects of their lives - work, family, friendships, pleasure - in the pursuit of happiness. For most of us, it now seems that having more than

Darwinian evolution, even in its most sophisticated, "selfish gene" version. Over the past 30 years this theory has made great strides in explaining human societies and behaviour. By concentrating on natural selection at the level of the gene, not the individual, and by taking humanity's starting point as a group-living ape, it has offered evolutionary explanations for some human attributes which would seem to contradict crude Darwinism. Why, if there is a struggle for existence in which only the fittest survive, do we have altruism and guilt? What



## Help stop this now

Day after day, this bear is dragged into a bloody arena to face pairs of bull terriers. His teeth have been ripped out and his claws blunted, so he is at the dogs' mercy. The bear doesn't know the trainer won't let him be killed, but the bear doesn't know this. Over and over again, he is fighting for his life.

Over 2,000 bear-baitings take place each year in Pakistan, despite the fact that they are now banned by law.

Our Liberty campaign frees captive bears, campaigns to enforce laws protecting bears, and fights ignorance with training and education.

Please help WSPA's campaign against bear baiting. Return this coupon with your gift to the address below.

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I enclose my donation of £ \_\_\_\_\_ (Please make cheques payable to WSPA or fill in your credit card details below.)

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Card No. \_\_\_\_\_ (If using Switch, please use the number printed in the middle of your card)

Expiry date \_\_\_\_\_ Switch issue no \_\_\_\_\_ Today's date \_\_\_\_\_

Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Tick here if you would like a free information pack.

Please send this completed form and your donation to: WSPA, Dept AL503, Prospect House, Northampton, NN5 5EF. No stamp is needed. THANK YOU.

Free Charity No. 255000

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## Edward Mills

Edward David Mills, architect, born London 19 March 1915; CBE 1959; married 1939 Elsie Bryant (one son, one daughter); died Gatwick, Surrey 23 January 1998.

The timber-framed farmhouse in Surrey where Edward Mills lived is not the setting in which one would expect to find a pioneer of modern architecture, but modernism was for him essentially a continuation of the straightforward building practice of the past. His career was distinguished by a concern with the way that buildings are made and what happens to them thereafter. He was also more interested than many modern architects in the people who used them, and far from insensitive to their visual style.

Mills's Methodist faith was an important aspect of his life. It shaped his upbringing in Streatham, south-west London, in the 1920s, provided his first independent commission, for a Methodist Church at nearby Colliers Wood in 1937, and determined his wartime role as a conscientious objector.

His father and grandfather were involved in construction and he started his career as an architect in 1930, aged 15, learn-

ing from the bottom up in a small London firm. Since and Housh. At Regent Street Polytechnic, he switched his allegiance from Lutyns to Le Corbusier, and was delighted when he discovered a vigorous young third-year master, E. Maxwell Fry, who was himself in the process of discovering modern architecture.

Mills joined Fry as his first assistant in 1934, when Fry broke away from the town planning practice of Adams and Thompson. This was a congenial and creative environment, a crossroads for the varied social and artistic ideas of modernism. Later in 1934 Walter Gropius, the former director of the Bauhaus, seeking refuge from Nazism in England, and his assistant A.E. Proskauer, joined the practice. Outside the office, Mills became an avid follower of ballet and was involved in the Methodist Youth Service Council and raising funds for victims of the Spanish Civil War.

The commission for the church and hall at Colliers Wood was offered in 1936, but only in 1937 when funds were found to build it did Mills set up on his own. The plan allowed for flexible use of the spaces, with a focus on community and social activity. The style is redolent of the 1930s, with a pleasant approach from the street under a concrete canopy, held up on thin steel columns, past a front garden into a light and airy central space.

This was originally distinguished by a mural of Christ washing the disciples' feet, by the émigré German artist Hans Feibusch who had previously done several commissions for Fry. Mills was proud that, although later detached and lost, this was the first of Feibusch's long sequence of church murals. Edward Mills married on 2 September 1939, the day before war was declared, and found architectural work for the duration of the Second World War with the pharmaceutical firm May & Baker of Dagenham, a subsidiary of Rhône-Poulenc. As manufacturers of the first commercially available antibiotic, the factory needed to expand and Mills built a canteen with a wavy shell concrete roof to overcome the shortage of steel. This cheerful but modest building was a breakthrough in a building technique which became widespread after the war. It still serves its original function and was one of the earliest post-war buildings to be listed.

After the war, Mills re-established his practice in London and built flats in Kenmore Road, Hackney, in 1947, using the box-frame principle developed by Ove Arup for Lubeck and Tecton's Spa Green Flats, Islington. His practice included industrial buildings, schools, and further Methodist churches at West Greenwich, Mitcham and Woking and the cathedral at Mbale, Uganda.

He was designer for the administration building, squeezed on to the South Bank site for the Festival of Britain as an afterthought, and for a distinctive screen of coloured balls. He was architect for the British Industry Pavilion at the Brussels Expo 1958, creating a plain box with curtain walling and a space frame canopy in front, a precursor of his last and largest building, the National Exhibition Centre, Birmingham.

Mills wrote books on factory, church and office design, all with a clear practical approach. His standard work *Building Maintenance and Preservation* (1980), when last revised in 1994, included commentaries on the posterity of the classic modern buildings of his youth. He was one of the first to recognise the short life expectancy of many of the techniques which had replaced traditional building after the war.

In the summer of 1997 celebrated 60 years of architectural practice with an exhibition and party in his barn at Lingfield. — Alan Powers



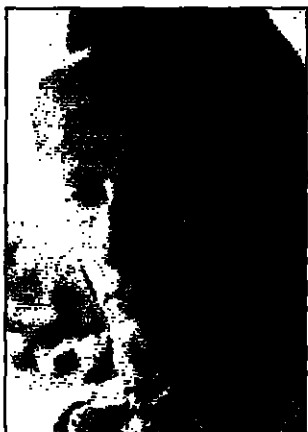
Patient observation: Professor John Bayley, 1972, a portrait from Stone's *Thinking Faces* (1988)

## Janet Stone

Janet Clemence Woods, photographer, born Cromer, Norfolk 1 December 1912; married 1938 Reynolds Stone (died 1979; two sons, two daughters); died Salisbury, Wiltshire 30 January 1998.

Overlooked by ancient downland, the village of Litton Cheney in the far west of Dorset lies in one of the most magical parts of England. There, for 26 years, Janet Stone lived at the Old Rectory, with her husband Reynolds Stone, the distinguished engraver and typographer.

A descendant of Elizabeth Fry, the prison reformer, Janet Stone came of an ecclesiastical family (her father, Edward Woods, was Bishop of Croydon and then of Lichfield; one of her brothers, Frank, was Archbishop of Melbourne, another, Robin, Bishop of Worcester). She shared the qualities which singled her father out for church leadership – a good-tempered, gregarious nature,



Stone: a romantic

personal magnetism, organising powers and a strong, melodious voice.

So fine a soprano was she indeed that for three months, early in her marriage, she trained as an opera singer under the famous Italian teacher Miele, who gave her free lessons because he believed her to be better equipped to sing Verdi than anyone he had ever met. But the training separated her too much from her husband and her household, which had become the centre of her life. Her decision to give up her musical career was a loss to opera but not to British cultural life, for her creative energies went into making a perfect environment where some of the best British artists and writers came to work and to relax.

With her social curiosity and zest for life she had immediately increased their circle after they married, drawing in the many clever and talented people with whom her husband came in contact, but was too shy to entertain. This led to some notable collaborations – such as his illustrations to a selection of Benjamin Britten's songs, his dust-jackets for the books of Iris Murdoch and Cecil Day Lewis and his watercolours and engravings for *Another Self* and *Ancestral Voices* by James Lees-Milne. The stream of guests in summer brought Reynolds a large number of close friendships, such as he had never enjoyed before.

Janet Stone was in a long line (now extinct) of Victorian and Edwardian hostesses that included Julia Margaret Cam-

eron, Blanche Warre-Cornish and Mrs Leslie Stephen, whose cultured gatherings represented a higher peak of English civilisation, despite their modesty, than did most of the grand aristocratic establishments of the period. At Litton Cheney with the Stones, it was easy to believe oneself a hundred years back in time: there were fires in every bedroom, readings aloud round the drawing-room hearth in the evenings, lunch in a little arbour of Janet's design, picnics in high summer on the desert Cheshill beach, winding walks through a woodland garden full of rivulets and small bridges, and, amazingly, butter from their cow (and churn).

The company, whether it were Sidney Nolan, L.P. Hartley, Henry Moore or Frances Partridge, was always entertaining. One might say that Janet's motto was, "If a thing is worth doing, it is worth doing by hand"; and such perfectionism was pursued on a very modest income and with the assistance of only one devoted helper in the kitchen. Janet Stone was a romantic with a strong element of fantasy in her make-up, which did not clash with her practical abilities. Her handsome and stylish appearance recalled the Edwardian age. With her wide-brimmed hats and veils to protect her delicate skin, her corn-coloured hair and upright carriage, she made a memorable impression. Her conversation was ardent, emphatic and humorous. For all her enthusiasm for making new and illustrious acquaintances, she was unex-

clusive and was devoted to the many young people who came to stay and were bewitched by the demi-paradise that she had created.

Surprisingly, despite her galvanising presence, she was not self-confident. She depended absolutely on her husband and after his death, in 1979, she gave up the house and entertaining on the same scale. Without Reynolds, the life in Litton Cheney was unbearably lonely.

Her life and home with him are commemorated in her photographs, some of which have been published in her own work, *Thinking Faces* (1988), others of which were commissioned for books and magazines; she took the author portrait for Kenneth Clark's 1969 book-of-the-television-series *Civilisation*. A collection of her prints is now in the National Portrait Gallery archive.

She worked almost entirely in black-and-white. Most of her best portraits were done at Litton Cheney, with one of her three cameras, a Canon, a Yashica and an old Rolleiflex, the product of hours of patient observation. Some have an extraordinary spiritual depth – such as those of Iris Murdoch, David Jones and John Piper – as beautiful in their way as those of the four Stone children taken in childhood and youth; and humour runs through many of her images – of John Bayley, Professor of English Literature, lying happily asleep on a railway line; and of John Sparrow, *Warden of All Souls*, reading absently, with a teacup on his head.

— Hugh Cecil

## Karin Jonzen

Karin Löwenadler, sculptor, born London 22 December 1914; married 1944 Basil Jonzen (died 1969; one son; marriage dissolved), 1972 Ake Sucksdorff (deceased); died London 29 January 1998.

Karin Jonzen was a peculiarly attractive figure. Her peculiarity sprang from her endearing mixture of eccentricity, high-mindedness and eternal optimism. These qualities overlaid, but did not conceal, the directness and simplicity which were also reflected in her work.

Born in London in 1914 to Swedish parents, Uno and Gerda Löwenadler, she was originally thrust into an artistic career by her father, who, because of her output of comic drawings, saw a future for her as a *Punch* cartoonist. He sent her to the Slade and, as she later reported in a brief autobiography (in *Karin Jonzen Sculpture*, 1994), was not at all pleased when she began to take art seriously.

She spent a good deal of time in the British Museum and the National Gallery, where she laid the foundations for her later "classical" style. In 1937, when she was 22, she was runner-up for the Prix de Rome, open to all UK and Commonwealth artists under the age of 30.

Her parents then sent her away to Stockholm in order to get her away from a boyfriend of whom they disapproved. There she met and fell in love with a penniless young Swedish poet, Ake Sucksdorff, and so was promptly hauled back to England again. In 1939 she won the Prix de Rome at her second attempt.

At this point the Second World War disrupted any plans she might have made. Separated from Sucksdorff, she corre-



Jonzen: insouciant

sponded with him for a while, but fell out of touch. She became a Civil Defence ambulance driver and was invalided out of the service with rheumatic fever. She said, later, that this illness gave her time to read and think. She had begun to fall out of love with the modernist current in sculpture. Though well aware of the work of artists like Henry Moore, Brancusi, Zadkine and Picasso, she came to believe that there was "a wave of sculpture that did violence to the human form in an attempt to force it into some sort of aesthetic finality".

In 1944 she met Basil Jonzen, another Anglo-Swede. Jonzen is now almost forgotten, but he was a kind of meteor in the British art world during the immediately post-war years. Originally an instantly successful painter, holding sell-out exhibitions at a time when British artists hardly sold at all, he was also a brilliantly funny raconteur and a magpie collector with a wonderful eye. He and Karin married soon after they met.

As soon as Basil got out of the service they set up an art gallery in the elegant house they had bought in South Bolton Gardens, Kensington, using their eclectic collection as their original stock. The gallery was an instant success, and attracted all the leading collectors of the day, among them the Sainsburys, Epstein and Kenneth Clark. Karin's own career as a sculptor was pulled along with it, and she was praised by critics such as Herbert Read and Eric Newton.

Basil was not one for the long haul, however. He spent more time drinking and talking than looking for new stock, and after three years the Jonzens decided to move to the country. Here Basil found and fitted out a lovely old farmhouse in Suffolk. The flow of commissions continued but Karin's health deteriorated. Eventually she was diagnosed with advanced tuberculosis – Basil also had the disease, in less serious form.

Recovered, they moved back to London, and Basil started a new gallery in Cork Street, the St George's Gallery, with Agatha Sadler and Robert Erskine. Basil's eye was as good as ever – he spotted the young Elisabeth Frink and gave her her first show – but his personality deteriorated alarmingly due to his now advanced alcoholism.

Karin's initial reputation had begun to fade. In comparison with that of a new generation of modernists her work seemed tame and old-fashioned. At the same moment her marriage came to an end, and she was left on her own with a young son.

Though she usually denied the fact, the ensuing years must have been hard. No commercial gallery would show her work, though she continued to exhibit at the Royal Academy and received occasional commissions. At one point she was reduced to making editions of miniature sculptures in bronze-resin for a firm called Heritage. Her parents aged, and she devoted three years to looking after them. In his will, her father left her enough money to buy the rather Spartan Chelsea studio in which she lived for the rest of her life.

In the 1970s she had another matrimonial disaster. She went to Stockholm and rediscovered her old flame Ake Sucksdorff. Impulsively she married him, only to find that he had become a totally negative personality, completely cut off from life. "I never entered my head," she said later, "that Ake wasn't telling the truth about himself. It took just one week of marriage to discover this!" The union, however, lasted until Ake died.

At this point her career, finally, began to recover. She was in demand as a sculptor of portrait busts. In 1994 she had her first commercial gallery exhibition for many years, at the David Messum Gallery in Cork Street. A small book was published about her. She retained her wonderfully insouciant personality to the end – talking about Schopenhauer at one moment, and about the delights of riding a motor scooter at the age of 80 the next. For her epitaph one hesitates between two sentences, both her own: "So far every ride has been a joy ride," or "I wanted to find out something of what life is all about." On balance, the latter seems the better choice.

— Edward Lucie-Smith

## Fr Raymond Bruckberger

Further to Professor Douglas Johnson's obituary of Fr Raymond Bruckberger (9 January), it may be worth drawing attention to the role the Dominican priest played in the creation of Poulenc's opera *Dialogues des Carmélites*, which was set in 1792 (and premiered in 1957), writes Antony Peattie.

On the score's title-page Poulenc acknowledged the con-

tribution made by Bruckberger's film scenario on the same subject (co-written with Philippe Agostini). Bruckberger's unique wartime experience as chaplain (*aumônier*) to the Resistance surely contributed to the opera's evocation of religion under pressure. It may even have inspired Poulenc's portrait of the convent's fearless chaplain, L'Aumônier.

## Sam Perrin

Sam Perrin, comedy writer and musician; born 15 August 1901; died Woodland Hills, California 8 January 1998.

Nominated seven times and twice winner of the Emmy Award for his work on *The Jack Benny Show*, Sam Perrin was, for a generation, a key member of one of the finest and most successful comedy-writing teams in US radio and television.

Perrin was working as a drummer in 1920s vaudeville when he first met Benny, whose laconic style had already inspired one critic to describe his comedy act as "the most civilised in vaudeville". Perrin's offbeat sense of humour amused the discerning Benny, who commissioned jokes from him.

Perrin was soon selling material to other comedians, including Benny's friend Phil Baker, who had one of radio's top-rated programmes. When Baker was cast in the film *The Goldwyn Follies* (1938), Perrin was signed to touch up his scenes. Despite 10 other writers and songs by George and Ira Gershwin, Samuel Goldwyn's extravaganza was a disaster, rightly included in Harry Michael Medved's 1978 book *The Fifty Worst Movies of All Time*. Not much better was Warner Brothers' *Navy Blues* (1941), an Ann Sheridan/Jack Oakie potboiler which Perrin helped to write. Variety declared: "It all adds up to the story department unwittingly scuttling *Navy Blues* before it was even launched."

In 1943 Jack Benny, whose

radio series was being beaten in the ratings by Bob Hope's faster-paced show, hired Perrin and three other writers to streamline the programme. The scripting was divided: Perrin and George Balzer wrote one half of the show; John Tackaberry and Mill Josephberg wrote the other. The arrangement worked well, and the decline in the series' ratings soon stopped.

Although Perrin was a Jewish atheist and Balzer a devout Catholic, the two men proved an ideal team. In 1945 they took a leave of absence from Benny's employ to go east; they had written the book of a Broadway musical. With a score by the veteran composer Harry Revel, *Are You With It?* was the story of a shy young accountant who, sacked from his firm for putting a decimal point in the wrong

place, joins a carnival and finds his sheltered life transformed. The critic George Jean Nathan praised the show's sets and costumes, its leading lady (Dolores Gray), and the welcome absence of pretentious dream ballets – a staple of 1940s musicals.

"Such minor virtues," Nathan added, "almost alone for the presence of the antiquated plot business about the person whose identity is only to be established by a birthmark on an embarrassing part of the anatomy."

*Are You With It?* ran for 267 Broadway performances, and was bought by Universal Pictures as a vehicle for their star Donald O'Connor. The comedian Lew Parker, who had scored in the stage version as Goldy, an unprincipled carnival barker ("Even as a boy I had to

scrimp and scrape. I saved every cent I stole"), played the same role in the film, but failed to achieve an equivalent success; most of his comedy scores were cut. "George [Balzer] and I had no hand in the movie at all," said Perrin. "Universal even dropped all of Harry Revel's tunes and replaced them! There were two studio geniuses assigned to the picture, one to take out the songs, and one to take out the jokes."

In 1952, searching for gimmicks for the Benny programme, Perrin suggested that Jack write a song, and then try, week after week, to make it a hit. A suitably terrible ballad, "When You Say I Beg Your Pardon," then I'll Come Back to You," was duly written, and led to a succession of hilarious programmes, as various re-

luctant star vocalists were urged to sing it.

In 1950 Benny stepped tentatively into television, taking his four writers with him. "No question about it – Jack Benny is as big a tele clerk as he has been on top of the radio heap for so many years," enthused *Variety*. In 1959 and 1960 Perrin's work for the Benny shows won him two Emmy awards. In 1974, when Benny finally stopped doing a regular television series, Mill Josephberg, by then head writer and script consultant for Lucille Ball's *Here's Lucy*, hired Perrin and Balzer to turn out scripts for Ball.

In his book *The Jack Benny Show* (1977), Josephberg wrote: "To list all the great gags and bits Sam Perrin contributed to the success of our shows would fill volumes."

— Dick Vosburgh

**BIRTHS**  
HOBBS: Anna Clare on 20 December 1997, to Peter and Rachel (née Brybrook), a sister for Kathryn, Helen and Sarah.

**DEATHS**  
SANDERS: Colin, aged 50 years. Tragically on Wednesday 28 January 1998. Much-loved husband of Rosie, loving father of James, Craig and Terri. The Funeral Service is to take place at Metcheston College Chapel on Thursday 5 February 1998 at 11am, followed by committal at Oxford Crematorium at 12.30pm. Cut flowers only, or donations if desired for the Prince's Trust may be sent to R.V.

## BIRTHS, MARRIAGES & DEATHS

Mallett, 124 Lime Walk, Headington, Oxford OX3 7AF. Or donations direct to any charity of your choice. A memorial service is planned for Thursday 5 March. Enquiries 01865 744500.

For BIRTHS, MARRIAGES & DEATHS please telephone 071-235 2812.

**BIRTHDAYS**  
Mr Ken Bruce, broadcaster, 47; Sir Gordon Bryce, former Chief Justice of the Bahamas, 85; The Earl of Clarendon, former chairman and managing director, Seacombe, Marshall and Campion, 65; Dr MacDonald Crichtley, neurologist, 98; Mr Andrew Davis, conductor, and musical director, Glyndebourne Festival Opera, 54; The Very Rev Dr Victor de Wail, former Dean of Canterbury, 69; Mr Abba Eban, former Israeli foreign minister, 83; Mr Glyn Edwards, actor, 67; Mr Ronnie Fearn MP, 67; Sir Norman Fowler MP, 60;

M Valéry Giscard d'Estaing, former French president, 72; Mr Marcus Hope, ambassador to Zaire, 56; Mr David Jason, actor, 58; Mr David Jones, chief executive, Nest, 55; Sir Chipe Kessick, chairman, *Hamlets Bank*, 58; Mr Barry McGuigan, featherweight boxing champion, 37; Dame Alix Mayne, former senior civil servant, 95; Miss Libby Purves, television presenter, 48; Miss Elaine Strick, actress and singer, 71.

**Anniversaries**  
Births: Lodovico Ferrari, mathematician, 1522; (Eleanor) Nell

Gwynn, actress and mistress of Charles II, 1650; Louis Marchand, organist and composer, 1669; William Borlase, naturalist, antiquarian and cleric, 1695; Hannah More, religious writer, 1745; John Nichols, printer and author, 1745; Daniel MacLise, historical painter, 1806; Henry Howlock Ellis, sex psychologist, 1859; Fritz Kreisler, violinist and composer, 1875; James Augustine Joyce, author, 1882; James Stephens, poet and novelist, 1882; Les (Leslie) Dawson, comedian, 1934. Deaths: Baldassare Castiglione, writer and courtier, 1529; Giovanni

Pierluigi da Palestrina, composer, 1594; Sir Owen Seaman, editor of *Punch*, 1936; Bertrand Russell, third Earl Russell, philosopher, 1970; Alastair Maclean, novelist, 1987; Bernard Braden, broadcaster, 1993; Fred Perry (Frederick John Perry), tennis-player, businessman and broadcaster, 1995; Donald Pleasence, actor, 1995; Gene Kelly (Eugene Curran Kelly), dancer and singer, 1996. On this day King Stephen was defeated and captured at the Battle of Lincoln, 1141; at the Battle of Mortimer's Cross, the Yorkists defeated the Lancastrians, 1461; Greece de-

clared war on Turkey, 1878; bread rationing was introduced in Britain, 1917; following a Russian-Estonian peace treaty, Estonia was declared independent, 1920; 60 countries attended the Disarmament Conference in Geneva, 1932; the remaining German army at Stalingrad surrendered to the Russians, 1943; in Uganda, Maj-Gen Idi Amin declared himself to be absolute ruler, 1971; a mob in Dublin burned down the British Embassy, 1972. Today is the Feast Day of St Adolph of Ostrevent, St Joan de Lestonnac, the Martyrs of Ebsdorf and the Purification.

**ROYAL ENGAGEMENTS**  
The Queen, Honorary Air Cdr, visits RAF Marham, Kings Lynn, Norfolk.

**Changing of the Guard**  
The Household Cavalry Mounted Regiment mounts the Queen's Life Guard at Horse Guards, 11am; No 7 Company Coldstream Guards mounts the Queen's Guard, at Buckingham Palace, 11.30am, band provided by the Grenadier Guards.

For reasons of space, this week's CASE SUMMARIES have been held over.



## Some capital reasons behind Footsie's continued bull run

## WEEK AHEAD



DEREK PAIN

One reason why so many of the City's strategists are bullish over the direction of blue chips is the current craze for returning capital to shareholders.

Share buy-backs and special dividends have been responsible for swelling the coffers of investors, both institutional and private. But in most cases the cash is re-invested, finding its way back to the stock market and inevitably helping to push shares still higher.

Last year, the major special dividends and buy-backs produced around £6bn. This year, NatWest Securities estimates, the figure could be £10bn.

It could be argued that institutional shareholders already have an embarrassment of cash riches. Many fund managers have stood back as Footsie has exceeded peak after peak.

They have built up cash piles, sniffing disparagingly that shares are overvalued and

declaring they will not venture forth until blue chips are more realistically priced. The trouble, from their standpoint, is shares have grown more expensive as they have dithered.

To pile on the discomfort share buy-backs are reducing the number of shares available for them to buy when they do move into the market.

Bob Semple and David McBain at NatWest say one of the compelling bull arguments is the "institutional demand-supply balance". They believe institutional cash flows will be around £63bn this year but the net supply of shares will fall way sharply. "We forecast a near £4bn outflow in 1998," they say.

The NatWest men say research giant Rio Tinto's decision to buy back 10 per cent of its shares over 18 months is likely to cost £1bn and means £6bn is earmarked for shareholders.

The bull case is also supported by Merrill Lynch's insiders' survey. It discovered that in December five directors bought shares in their own companies for every one who sold. "This is the strongest positive signal from our UK equity insider indicator since November, 1987," when, of course, the market was struggling to recover from the dramatic crash which devastated prices. Surprisingly, there is nowadays a tendency to write off the 1987 crash as a mere hiccup in the history of stock markets.

Fund managers, according to another Merrill survey, remain cautious on shares. They could be talking their book? Allan Collins at stockbroker Redmayne Bentley offers another reason why optimism should prevail. Fund managers are already strong in government stocks and there may not be much new stock issued this year. "So equities could be

swinging back into favour simply because there are few attractive alternatives."

He adds: "The prospect of further consolidation in the leading sectors could be enough to have the big boys dipping into their bulging cash boxes.... As far as equities are concerned, the UK is the place to be at the moment."

Prediction, of course, is a hazardous exercise. Shares have a nasty habit of leaving the experts with egg on their faces.

Last year's Footsie surge caught most on the wrong foot. Despite the vast array of expensive and sophisticated research available, markets have behavioural problems which are nearly impossible to rationalise.

David Schwartz, who spends much of his time studying market quirks, has produced an interesting, little appreciated statistic. His delving shows that in the final week of January shares have advanced in 19 of the past 22 years.

Why? Mr Schwartz is at a loss for an explanation. And it is doubtful if any expensive research could provide one.

Last week Footsie, when many were suggesting the bull market was at last running out of steam, gained a remarkable 277.1 points, hitting new highs on three consecutive days.

But if the outlook is regarded as bright for blue chips there remains a reluctance to offer comfort to the market's under card. Small companies have limped lamely behind their peers, as illustrated by ABN-Amro Hoare Govett's small companies index.

Although it reached a peak during last year, ending 9.5 per cent higher, its display paled into insignificance when measured against the 28.7 per cent rise and, indeed, the 23.6 per cent gain achieved by the FTSE All Share index since 1989.

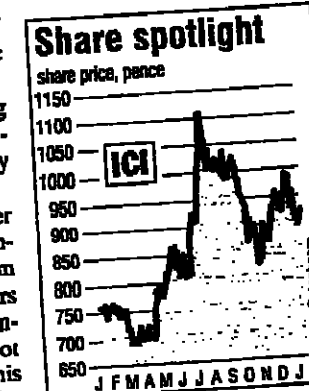
Yet from 1985 to 1989 it outperformed the All Share by 6 per cent. Professors Elroy Dimson and Paul Marsh believe this movement away from small

companies is simply a result of the smaller firm growing more slowly in recent years than bigger groups and "market prices have adjusted accordingly".

BAA, the airports group, and Imperial Chemical Industries, dominate this week's results programme.

Today BAA flies in with nine-month profits expected to be around £410m, against £397m last time. ICI, on Thursday, offers year's results. Once regarded as the bellwether of Britain's economic health, ICI's results no longer have the impact they once enjoyed.

Market expectations are already low. Following the sweeping changes at the group, rather dismal profits of around £395m, down from £603m, are likely. Still, hopes are running high there will be a strong rebound this year at what is now a speciality chemical group to, say, £625m.



Share price, pence

JFMAMJJASONDJ

Source: Bloomberg

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Netherlands

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Sweden

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## Glaxo and SmithKline Beecham face drugs sell-off to seal £100bn mega-merger

Glaxo Wellcome and SmithKline Beecham are expected to sell some of their best-selling drugs in order to avoid a full-scale regulatory inquiry into their proposed £100bn mega-merger. Meanwhile unions are asking the Government to block the deal, which they fear could lead to the loss of 10,000 jobs in the UK. Nigel Cope, City Correspondent, reports.

Disposals are likely in two areas of therapeutic drugs where Glaxo and SmithKline dominate their markets. In anti-viral drugs, used to treat infections such as Herpes, Glaxo markets the highly successful Zovirax while SmithKline has Famvir.

In drugs used to combat nausea caused from chemotherapy, Glaxo and SmithKline dominate the market with Zofran and Kytril respectively. The two companies expect they will have to make disposals in these areas in order to satisfy the competition authorities that consumer choice would be protected and that a position of market dominance would not be used to raise prices.

There is a parallel with the Glaxo takeover of Wellcome in 1995, when both companies had migraine treatments in late stages of development. Glaxo sold its drug to Zeneca.

The deal will be scrutinised by the Federal Trade Commission in the US and the European Commission in the European Union. However, it is possible that the UK competition authorities could seek to gain a role in the inquiry process.

Though a merged Glaxo-Wellcome and SmithKline Beecham would be a UK company with its base in London, unions have reacted angrily to the prospect of widespread redundancies here. They fear up to 10,000 jobs cuts as part of a £1bn cost-cutting programme and say it will reduce the country's pool of skilled scientists, hit competition and reduce consumer choice. Roger Lyons, the general secretary of the

MSF, the manufacturing, science and finance union, said: "Our concern is that the only advantage of the deal is in cutting costs by shedding jobs." The union is calling for urgent meetings with Margaret Beckett, President of the Board of Trade, as well as MEPs and both companies.

The biggest threat to jobs is at the two groups' head offices and sales and marketing centres. Glaxo's head office is in Greenford while SmithKline employs almost 2,000 people in head office and sales functions at several offices in Brentford.

It is not clear whether the group's main research and development centres could be threatened. Glaxo opened a £700m facility in Stevenage in 1995. SmithKline spent £250m on a new site in Harlow, Essex, which opened last April.

Neither company would comment on possible research closures though SmithKline said: "The driving force behind this merger is that it would build a R&D function that would be second to none."

The combined research spending of the merged group would be £2bn. SmithKline claims this would be double the spending of any other drugs company. Analysts estimate that the UK job loss figure could be closer to 2,000, mostly from head office and sales functions.

They were responding to the surprise announcement late on Friday that the two companies were in detailed discussions which could lead to a full scale merger. The deal would be the largest merger in corporate history and create the third-largest company in the world after General Electric of the US and Royal Dutch-Shell, the Anglo-Dutch Group. It will also be the world's largest pharmaceutical company, leapfrogging Merck of the US.

The proposals also mean that SmithKline has dropped its plans to merge with American Home Products in a £77bn deal that was only announced last week.

The terms of the deal have already been decided even though the two groups first made contact only eight days ago. Glaxo shareholders will hold 59.5 per cent of the group

### How the new drug giant shapes up

#### GlaxoWellcome



**FactFile**  
Sales: £8.14bn  
Pre-tax profits: £2.70bn  
Market value: £58.6bn  
Work force: 54,900  
Head office: Greenford, Middlesex  
Top products: Zantac anti-ulcer treatment, herpes drug Zovirax, Imgran migraine treatment, Ventolin asthma drug, Retrovir and Epiriv Aids treatments.  
\*Salomon Smith Barney forecasts  
Richard Sykes  
Executive Chairman

#### SB SmithKline Beecham



**FactFile**  
Sales: £7.98bn  
Pre-tax profits: £2.37bn  
Market value: £43.1bn  
Work force: 57,000  
Head office: Brentford, Middlesex  
Top products: Panadol Painkiller, Andrew's liver salts, Aquashash and Naclean toothpaste, Nicorette anti-smoking patches, Serostat antidepressant, Tagamet anti-ulcer drug, Fibren, Lucaze.  
\*Salomon Smith Barney forecasts  
Jan Leschly  
Chief Executive

#### World's ten largest pharmaceutical companies

	Country	Pharmaceutical sales \$bn
Glaxo Wellcome/SmithKline Beecham	UK	22.7
Merck	US	16.0
Novartis	Switzerland	13.4
Bristol Myers Squibb	US	12.2
Pfizer	US	10.7
Roche	Switzerland	10.5
American Home Products	US	10.5
Johnson & Johnson	US	8.9
Hoechst	Germany	8.2
Eli Lilly	US	7.4

#### World's ten largest companies

	Country	Market value \$bn
General Electric	US	223
Royal Dutch/Shell	UK/Neth	191
Glaxo Wellcome/SmithKline Beecham	UK	166
Microsoft	US	160
Exxon	US	158
Coca-Cola	US	151
Intel	US	151
Nippon Telegraph & Telephone	Japan	146
Merck	US	121
Toyota	Japan	117

### Seven days to the biggest merger ever

The way the mega-merger between Glaxo Wellcome and SmithKline Beecham was hatched is an extraordinary tale which involves two men agreeing on the largest ever deal in corporate history in a matter of days. It was only last Saturday that Sir Richard Sykes, the wiry Yorkshireman who chairs Glaxo Wellcome, made the crucial telephone call to Jan Leschly, his opposite number at SmithKline Beecham. Sir Richard was at his home in London while Mr Leschly was in Philadelphia. The Glaxo man congratulated Mr Leschly on the company's proposed deal with American Home Products (AHP), but suggested there was another way of creating a powerful new force in the drugs industry - a Glaxo/SmithKline merger.

Mr Leschly was a receptive audience. The charismatic Dane, who once ranked in the top 10 in men's world tennis, had already started to cool on the AHP deal. The reason, it is understood, was that Jack Stafford, the chairman of AHP, had decided he wanted to stay on in an active role in the enlarged group. Previously, it was thought that Mr Stafford, who has not been in the best of health, would step aside.

Though Mr Leschly would have liked a deal with AHP, the prospect of a tie-up with Glaxo was even more attractive. He agreed to meet with Sir Richard at a New York hotel on Tuesday. Amazingly, it seems that the pair managed to agree on most of the issues at this one face-to-face meeting. Analysts say this is because the two know each other well, having worked together at Squibbs, the US drugs giant, in the past.

The SmithKline board met on Thursday in Philadelphia to agree the terms. The Glaxo board met to do the same in London the following day. But as the two companies prepared to make the announcement, one key task remained. Mr Leschly had to place the telephone call to Mr Stafford to tell him that their deal was off. The reaction, sources say, "was not exactly polite".

- Nigel Cope

### Robinson to step down from BSkyB

Gerry Robinson is preparing to step down as chairman of British Sky Broadcasting (BSkyB), the satellite broadcaster, in the next few months. Mr Robinson, who also chairs Granada, the media and leisure group, is understood to have been considering the move for some time, though he has yet to make a final decision.

The step would leave the way open for Jérôme Seydoux, chairman of the French media group Pathé and currently a non-executive director, to take over the position.

Mr Robinson, who has held the post since December 1994, has recently taken on the job of chairman of the Arts Council. But industry insiders dismissed the suggestion that Mr Robinson, who prides himself on his short working hours, was seeking to reduce his workload.

The news comes amid signs

of mounting tension between BSkyB and British Digital Broadcasting (BDB), the digital broadcaster in which Granada has a 50 per cent stake.

Last month, it emerged that BSkyB had issued a writ against Granada and Carlton, the other shareholder in BDB, after the two groups stalled on a £70m payment. BSkyB is also involved in a stand-off with the Premier League about extending its rights to show live football matches to BDB.

Mr Robinson is likely to be quizzed about his position on Tuesday, when BSkyB reveals its interim results. Analysts expect pre-tax profits to fall to between £123m and £140m due to the rising cost of sports rights and the costs of launching digital satellite television, scheduled for June.

- Peter Thal Larsen

### City split on need for rate rise this week

Leading economists are split on the possibility of another interest rate increase this week as members of the Bank of England's Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) meet on Wednesday and Thursday.

Some City economists hold firm to their view that the cost of borrowing needs to increase again. In a paper published this morning, Michael Dicks of Lehman Brothers argues that more weight should be placed on indicators of inflationary

pressure such as higher earnings growth than on signs of weakness in manufacturing, like the latest CBI surveys.

Mr Dicks says: "Certainly the call is a close one. But if rates are not raised, then it will require some awfully good news on the inflation front to prevent a hike later in the year."

The Bank's "Inflation Report" this month was likely to have to show a higher forecast for inflation than its prediction in November because of higher-

than-expected figures in the meantime, he said.

On the other hand, the "shadow MPC" today advises the real thing to leave rates unchanged, although on a split vote.

This group - consisting of nine monetarist economists such as Sir Alan Walters, once adviser to Margaret Thatcher, Professor Patrick Minford, and Professor Peter Spencer of Birkbeck College - concluded that the recent figures failed to give a consistent picture of

where the economy was heading. The uncertainty swung the vote in favour of inaction.

A survey of small and medium-sized businesses in manufacturing, published this morning by the Confederation of British Industry and chartered accountants Pannell Kerr Foster, confirmed the subdued outlook in manufacturing. Business confidence fell to a five-year low, with export optimism down for the fifth time running.

- Diane Coyle

### Ex-paymaster general calls for 'millennium bug' tax break

A former Treasury minister will today call for the Government to give British firms a tax break to allow them to rid their computers of the millennium computer bug. The call is part of a package of measures which suggests levying a windfall tax on computer firms which are profiting from the problem.

Lord Cope of Berkeley, who was paymaster general for two years in the last government, has asked Gordon Brown, the

Chancellor, to introduce an allowance which would permit firms to write off all spending on tackling the millennium bug against tax in the year the cost is incurred. "At this stage of what is increasingly looking like a disaster scenario for the UK economy, a meaningful lead needs to be taken by the Government," he said.

The Government has attempted to increase awareness of the issue among firms

by launching Action 2000. Margaret Beckett, the President of the Board of Trade, is to chair a Cabinet committee on the problem, which involves computers recognising the year as a two rather than a four-digit figure.

However, surveys have shown that many firms cannot afford to tackle the bug, raising the prospect of mass bankruptcies when systems fail.

- Peter Thal Larsen

### Heron spreads its wings in £500m European expansion

Heron International, Gerald Ronson's property group, is planning to spend £175m developing four leisure and entertainment complexes on large sites in Stockholm, Lille, Barcelona and Madrid. Each site will contain a megaplex cinema operator, and will be surrounded by themed restaurants and bars, family entertainment centres and health clubs. Heron intends to invest a total of £500m in European leisure projects over the next four years.

### Sports chains set for deals

The rapid growth of sports retailers is likely to prompt a period of takeover activity and increased price competition as the big operators battle for market share. A survey published today by Verdict Research says that though consumer demand for sports clothing will grow, it is unlikely that the larger chains, such as JJB Sports and Sports Division, will be able to realise their growth ambitions through organic expansion alone. JD Sports is considered the most vulnerable to a takeover, after a profits warning last year and a poor Christmas trading statement. But smaller operators could also be gobbled up. Verdict also warned that Tesco's plan to offer cut price Nike merchandise would not work as "streetwise consumers do not want to buy such products from a supermarket".

### Sir Neil Shaw to retire

Sir Neil Shaw is expected to announce his retirement as chairman of Tate & Lyle at the sweetener group's annual meeting on Tuesday. Industry analysts have long expected Sir Neil, who has been at the helm of Tate & Lyle for over a decade and is approaching his 69th birthday, to step down. He is likely to be succeeded by Lynton Wilson, the chairman of Canadian telecom group BCE, who will become non-executive chairman.

### Rank silent on MD's position

Rank Group refused to comment yesterday on whether one of its executive directors might leave the group following a failed boardroom coup at the beleaguered Hard Rock Café to Holidays company. There has been speculation that John Garrett, managing director of Rank's leisure division, might leave after a group of directors tried to unseat Andrew Teare, the chief executive who has presided over a dramatic fall in Rank's share price. Sir Denis Henderson, the former ICI executive who is now chairman of Rank, is thought to have backed Mr Teare.

### Vauxhall wins £1bn contract

Vauxhall Motors has signed a car contract worth in excess of £1bn - the biggest ever in the UK - with National Car Rental, the car hire group. The deal requires Vauxhall to supply more than 60,000 new cars in equal tranches over the next three years. It will provide the new Astra range, its Corsa, Vectra and Omega models, as well as some vans.

### Barclays ventures aboard

Barclays Private Equity, the venture capital arm of Barclays Capital, is to open a new office in Germany, reflecting the trend for venture capitalists to seek more deals in continental Europe. The move comes as the group, which has changed its name from BZW Private Equity, confirmed a record year in 1997 with 21 deals completed with a total value of £582m.

#### STOCK MARKETS

FTSE 100									
Index	Close	Wk's chg	Wk's chg %	52 wk high	52 wk low	Yield %			
FTSE 100	5458.50	277.10	5.35	5434.1	4189.1	3.254			
FTSE 250	4861.50	54.60	1.14	4863.8	4384.2	3.288			
FTSE 350	2802.90	113.50	4.38	2800.6	2075.7	3.283			
FTSE All Share	2536.68	104.66	4.30	2525.03	2056.07	3.278			
FTSE SmallCap	2872.70	15.50	0.66	2407.4	2182.1	3.078			
FTSE AIM	973.60	-2.40	-0.25	1138	965.9	1.199			
FTSE Health	1292.70	9.30	0.73	1346.5	1225.2	3.136			
FTSE AIA	7906.50	205.76	2.67	8290.03	6356.78	1.737			
Nikkei	16628.47	-160.64	-0.96	20910.79	14488.21	0.967			
Dax	4440.38	203.07	4.79	4459.89	3008.91	1.802			

#### INTEREST RATES

UK interest rates						
						7.00
						6.00
						5.00
						4.00
						3.00
						2.00
						1.00
						0.00
						-1.00
						-2.00
						-3.00
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						-96.00
						-97.00
						-98.00
						-99.00
						-100.00

Money Market Rates					
Index	3 month	1 yr	1 year	1	
UK	7.56	1.25	7.48	0.67	
US	5.63	0.06	5.66	-0.28	
Japan	0.79	0.29	0.76	0.19	
Germany	3.53	0.38	3.78	0.55	

MAIN PRICE CHANGES					
Index	Price	% chg	Index	Price	% chg
Sun Life and Pro	565.5	20.72	Powerscreen	238	-54.05
Amescap	561	19.36	Reuters Hides	550	-8.94
Levi's	96.5	16.97	PizzaExpress	689	-7.08
HSBC Hides	1515	16.45	Premier Farnell	325.5	-6.31

#### CURRENCIES

US interest rates									
Index	3 month	6 month	1 year	1 yr chg	10 year	1 yr chg	Long bond	1 yr chg	% chg
US	5.63	0.06	5.66	-0.28	5.51	-1.07	5.81	-0.98	
Japan	0.79	0.29	0.76	0.19	2.01	-0.57	2.63	-0.55	
Germany	3.53	0.38	3.78	0.55	5.08	-0.73	5.67	-0.98	
Pound									
Index	3 month	6 month	1 year	1 yr chg	10 year	1 yr chg	Long bond	1 yr chg	% chg
£/\$	1.6344	-3.296	1.6140	-0.0204	1.6295	-4.926	1.6405	-0.0110	
£/DM	2.9601	+1.760	2.8412	-0.1189	2.8295	+4.926	1.6405	-0.0110	
£/Yen	207.37	-2.84	198.67	-4.30	207.37	-2.84	198.67	-4.30	
£ index	105.00	+0.10	95.20	+9.80	104.80	-0.20	102.00	+2.80	
Dollar									
Index	3 month	6 month	1 year	1 yr chg	10 year	1 yr chg	Long bond	1 yr chg	% chg
\$/£	0.6119	+1.21p	0.6196	+0.0077	0.6119	+1.21p	0.6196	+0.0077	
\$/DM	1.6295	+4.926	1.6405	+0.0110	1.6295	+4.926	1.6405	+0.0110	
\$/Yen	126.79	+11.26	121.36	+5.43	126.79	+11.26	121.36	+5.43	
\$ index	104.80	-0.20	102.00	+2.80	104.80	-0.20	102.00	+2.80	
OTHER INDICATORS									
Index	3 month	6 month	1 year	1 yr chg	10 year	1 yr chg	Long bond	1 yr chg	% chg
GDP	113.90	3.10	110.48	-3.42	113.90	3.10	110.48	-3.42	
RPI	100.00	3.60	154.44	-54.44	100.00	3.60	154.44	-54.44	
Base Rates	7.25	6.00							





## Lakeland views clash over money, cars and countryside

A car touring route proposed for the western fringe of the Lake District has run into trouble.

The plan conflicts with words about curbing the motor car. But, as Stephen Goodwin, Heritage Correspondent, reports, when jobs are at stake, green goals look like coming second.

One thing is certain. When the white-on-brown signs go up around Egremont they will not bear the legend bestowed on the unprepossessing little town by the comedian and folk singer Mike Harding. "Egremont - Gateway to Oblivia" was the title of a cruelly funny monologue about the post-industrial wasteland of the West Cumbrian coast.

Cut off by the Lakeland fells from the main transport arteries, it has always felt a place apart. Harding joked in the Seventies that anyone wearing a crash helmet was liable to be kicked to death by lads with long hair. "They think it's the Roundheads coming back."

But in truth the economy of West Cumbria needs all the visitors it can get. Iron and coal mines shut down long ago, leaving the area heavily dependent on British Nuclear Fuel's reprocessing plant at Sellafield. Even there, construction and other jobs have tailed off.

To tempt people away from the National Park, at least for a day trip, a 50-mile cir-



BY STEPHEN  
GOODWIN

cular tour has been devised. If the scheme goes ahead as planned, 40 signs will guide tourists round the route and 12 more will mark and describe former mining towns and villages, such as Cleator Moor or Frizington.

This weekend was the deadline for public comments on the scheme which has already gained the cautious approval of Cumbria County Council's economy and environment committee. However, the decision to promote car touring in the face of government advice and the council's own policy has provoked protests.

In a strongly worded submission, the Friends of the Lake District said the proposal was "fundamentally in conflict with current thinking on sustainable tourism and transport". Nor is there likely to be much gain for the West Cumbrian economy, claim the Friends, pointing out that day trippers are "notoriously small spenders".

"In addition, many visitors currently come to West Cumbria because of its peace and tranquillity compared to the central Lakes. If further commercial tourism is encouraged, the qualities they seek will be destroyed."

But the conservationists' objections are rejected by the Cumbria Tourist Board and Copeland Borough Council, the body putting up most of the £72,800 cost. Public transport is "practically non-existent" in the area and basic signing is needed in any case for some of the straggling settlements.

"Our aim as a council is to make sure there is the potential for employment," said John Hughes, economic development officer for Copeland. He knows that even on wet days hordes of motorists are not going to flock in from Keswick, but there



Green and pleasant land: Tourists flock every year to the countryside of West Cumbria (above), but tend to stay within the National Park itself, rather than venture into local communities (left). So, to bring the trippers and their money to Cumbrian shops, pubs and cafés, the council is proposing a signposted route for motor tours. This, however, has provoked strong protests from conservationists. Right: a postcard recalling the days before pollution raised environmental concerns. Photographs: John Voss



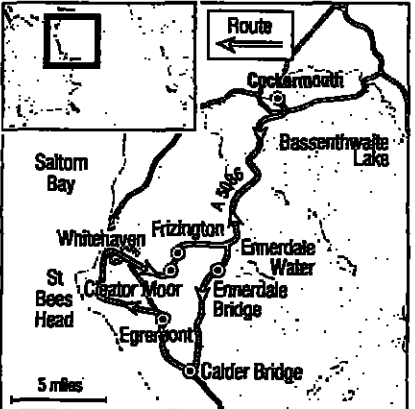
could be enough to keep the heritage mine at Egremont and the attractions in the port of Whitehaven in business and providing jobs, along with a wool centre and sundry cafés and pubs. Some might even grow.

Councillors keen to promote development along the coastal strip often shake a

metaphorical fist at the Friends of the Lake District and at the park authorities who try to preserve the western lakes as the quiet part of the national park. Even if the signing scheme goes ahead, there are doubts over some of the lay-bys proposed where the route abuts the park.

Two other "leisure drives or themed tours" have also been devised. A 55-mile "Back o' Skiddaw" tour to the north of the national park would take motorists over the fells towards the Solway Plain. More controversially, the Black Combe Tour is almost entirely within the park in the beautiful Duddon Valley-Eskdale area.

The county council has yet to make any decision on these tours. Officials have warned that the Black Combe route is "particularly sensitive". But Jan Darrall, assistant secretary of the Friends, fears that if the Coast Tour goes ahead it will set a precedent for deeper encroachments into the park.



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Name \_\_\_\_\_  
Address \_\_\_\_\_  
Postcode \_\_\_\_\_  
Daytime Telephone No. \_\_\_\_\_

YOUR VALENTINE'S DETAILS (in capitals)

Name \_\_\_\_\_  
Address \_\_\_\_\_  
Postcode \_\_\_\_\_  
Daytime Telephone No. \_\_\_\_\_

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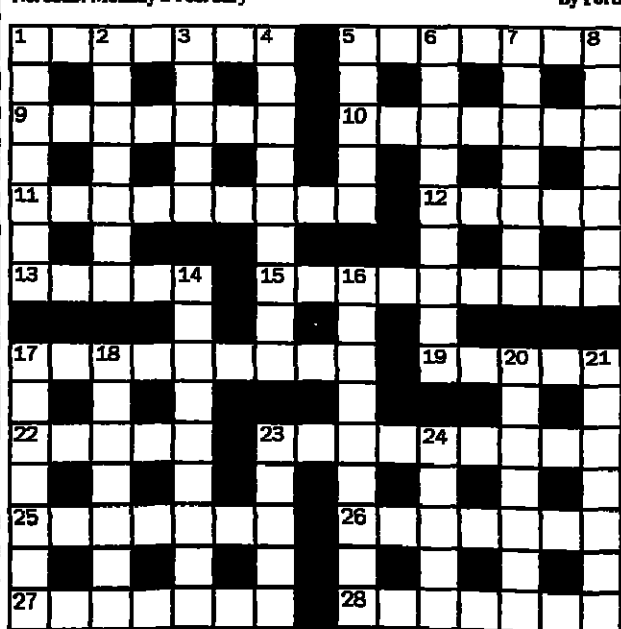
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### THE INDEPENDENT CROSSWORD

No. 3523, Monday 2 February

By Fortin



- ACROSS**
- Economical issue involving area (7)
  - American poet's wife is followed by assassin (7)
  - Permit English union leaders to enter food plant (7)
  - Very little rent or tiny tear (7)
  - Substitute's the scorer for City (9)
  - Superior to former political unit, we're told (5)
  - Occasion when plane's on time (5)
  - Not up to the mark and showing stress (9)
  - Cruel but lacking courage (9)
  - Holiday centre's stock is cut by a quarter (5)
  - Will find exit (5)
  - Slight period of difficulty? (1,4,4)
  - Said I noticed monstrosity (7)
  - Meeting one sails through? (7)

- DOWN**
- Agony felt by soldiers in the wrong (7)
  - Last in goes next, remember (7)
  - Madly spend Pole's money then clear out (7)
  - Thing's a bit of a non-starter (7)
  - Working Stateside by the end of June (2,3)
  - English river bird swallowing feed (5,4)
  - Line up includes one Dutch composer (5)
  - It's come out about right with one of equal measure (9)
  - Sort of a calm, greeting Biblical prophet (7)
  - Girl's name one had a legend about (7)
  - In front of other he disturbed (2,3,4)
  - Carry out duties for free (9)
  - Prince Henry was first to get weapon (7)
  - Awful trauma engulfs European sports person (7)
  - As long as there's a way to get inside pipe (7)
  - Understand boy's traced leak (7)
  - Able to join a section shortly (5)
  - Approaching Turkish capital after dark (5)

هكذا من الأصل